THE RHETORIC OF COOL: COMPUTERS, CULTURAL STUDIES, AND
COMPOSITION

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This dissertation addresses English studies' concerns regarding the integration of technology into the teaching of writing. Working from the general conception of cool as well as three distinct 1963 definitions of the term from the areas of technology, cultural studies, and composition, the dissertation uses cool as the basis for an electronic writing practice. Because the overlap of definitions occurs in 1963, the dissertation uses this date as a focal point for further exploration. By studying the rhetorical construction of 1963 texts from literature, film, music, and technology, the dissertation constructs a rhetoric of cool. In turn, the 1963 Conference on College Composition and Communication's call for a modern rhetoric is finally met. A rhetoric of cool creates a method for students writing electronically by teaching them how to construct meaning and produce knowledge in digital environments.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Rhetoric: The use of words by agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other human agents
Accordingly, what we want is not terms that avoid ambiguity, but terms that clearly reveal the strategic
spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise.
– Kenneth Burke

"It's cool, Sister Heavenly," he said in the voice of a convert giving a testimonial. "I got the real cool faith"
– Chester Himes *The Heat's On*

Cool is not a new concept to either popular or academic discourse. Contemporary

understandings of cool as technological phenomenon surface on the World Wide Web

in the guise of "cool sites," "cool tips," and "cool gadgets" or in e-mail bulletins such as

the popular "Cool Site of the Day Newsletter."[1] Such concentration tends to be on

worthwhile places to visit on the Web. Alan Liu's Voice of the Shuttle web portal,[2] for

instance, presents a "Laws of Cool" listing of sites that he feels combine literature and

information into an aesthetic category he defines as "cool." Liu foregrounds the purpose

of his project in an introductory paragraph on the site questioning the role of cool in

cultural and electronic discourse:

> Through such improvised categorizations as "techno-cool," "anti-verbal
> cool," and "ordinary cool" (e.g., pages recording someone's grocery list or
> daily journal), I hope to gain some initial purchase on the deeper issues.
> My goal is to make it possible eventually for critical consciousness to be
> brought to bear upon what otherwise seems one of the most single-minded
> and totalitarian aesthetics ever created. Why are there "cool sites of the
> day" but no beautiful, sublime, or tragic sites? Why is it that "cool," which
> came out of the border worlds of the jazz clubs in the '20s and '30s and the

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[1] offered by http://www.thecoolsiteoftheday.com

[2] http://vos.ucsb.edu/shuttle/cool.html

> Beats in the '50s is now so mainstream-hip that even the major corporations want "cool" home pages? Who does cool serve? (Liu)

Liu's project is pedagogical; its purpose to teach the meaning of cool as related to the information economy of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. CoOL,[3] "Resources for Conservation Professionals," also marks a place where pedagogy and cool intersect. CoOL, a "full text library of conservation information," utilizes the popular term to name its warehousing of documentation (text and audio) regarding conservation, to imply that ecologiscal attention can be cool; i.e., worthwhile, yet fashionable at the same time. Coolclass.com, on the other hand,[4] employs cool to keep educators updated on current classroom trends by listing a variety of online educational sources. The site's *Coolclass Chronicle* newsletter acts as an online clipping service, providing snippets of educational news for educators. Coolclass' choice of name also suggests that teaching and learning can be trendy, hip, and stylish.

Other web portals like Netscape and Yahoo hide their promotional activities under the title of "cool sites." Netscape, in particular, asks its readers "How Cool Are You."[5] The answer arrives via a link to Cnet.com's top ten "technojunkie" must haves. For these sites, to be cool means buying electronic gadgets, products sold under advertising packages set up with the site hosting the original link. Other sites, like The Cool Zones,[6] Project Cool,[7] and Yahoo Cool Links,[8] propose cool as long listings of out

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[3] http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/

[4] http://www.coolclass.com

[5] http://home.netscape.com/netcenter/cool.html

[6] http://cool.infi.net/zones.html

[7] http://www.projectcool.com/

of the ordinary web sites because of either design or content. Usually, the more bizarre or eclectic, the cooler the site. Netscape used to clarify its criteria for coolness by stating:

> Someday we'll all agree on what's cool on the Net. In the meantime, the Netscape cool team will continue to bring you a list of select sites that catch our eyes, make us laugh, help us work, quench our thirst . . . you get the idea. (Netscape)

Recently, the portal's policy has changed to the more direct statement:

> What Makes Us the Arbiters of Cool?
> It takes a willingness on our part to apply well-honed skills of judgment, together with a certain savoir faire. Of course, no one can claim to be the definitive source of cool  even though we're trying.  Meanwhile, we refuse to hoard cool URLs solely for our own enjoyment.[9] (Netscape)

The web site Everything2.com,[10] on the other hand, resists the listing trend and instead offers its Page of Cool and Cream of the Cool where registered users express in hypertext (or as the site describes it, "cools") opinions on contemporary cultural topics like "The Slow death of the Japanese meal," "Rules for tripping on hallucinogenic drugs," and "Everything as a literary composition."[11] The entries use a system of nodes to link with other entries creating a broad hypertextual site where politics, popular culture, and writing merge. Noders (users) of Everything represent the new media writers: self-described cool composers of radical, alternative ways of thinking.

Portals like Netscape's or Liu's present cool as a combination of technological savvy and underground sentiment. They propose that to be cool in the twenty-first century, one must be connected  to electronic culture. Like Cool.com, "a docking station

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[8] http://dir.yahoo.com/entertainment/cool_links/index.html

[9] http://home.netscape.com/netcenter/cool/editorial.html

[10] http://everything2.com/

[11] these topics were listed on the Page of Cool on December 29, 2000 at: http://everything2.com/index.pl?node=Page%20of%20Cool

for teens," cool has become the Web's direct connection to youth culture. Cool.com declares, "You know what's cool. We'll show you what's hot," and does so through its Cool WishBox section, Cooltoons comics, and free e-mail that allows registered users to become yourname@cool.com. These sites fall into the trap the editors of Suck.com satirize as a growing obsession with being hip and trendy. Suck.com's editors see the over-indulgent web site listings as pretentious and false entryways into youth culture. Site listings point to the Web as a new media tool only capable of supporting the latest trends in fashion or style. "Analysis and commentary are decidedly extraneous, 'Old Media' impediments, which only serve to obscure the fundamental catechism: 'Is it cool? Does it rule?'" (Suck) Overall, the belief that cool combines technology with rebellion is brought to the classroom by students raised in a media culture that teaches cool as meaning "good," "popular," "in," or "a form of approval" (Brathwaite 13), all within the context of teenage angst and electronic know how. In the university, students see cool as a feeling, an emotional state held over from counter culture attitudes developed in the late '50s and early '60s, which for that time period offered distance and dissatisfaction with the status quo as life strategies. This version of cool resembles Michael Jarrett's definition of the term in *Soundtracks*; cool can be divided into prophetic cool-- "characterized by barely harnessed rage"--and philosophical cool--"the existential void lurking behind a persona" (Jarrett 19). While this version of cool has been perceived as acting against the institutional order, today it is in fact dictated by fashion, popular music, television, and advertising; that is, its principles are appropriated by media formations for commercial purposes. As Thomas Frank writes in *The Conquest of Cool*,

> Regardless of the tastes of Republican leaders, rebel youth culture remains
> the cultural mode of the corporate moment, used to promote not only

specific products but the general idea of life in the cyber-revolution. Commercial fantasies of rebellion, liberation, and outright "revolution" against the stultifying demands of mass society are commonplace almost to the point of invisibility in advertising, movies, and television programming. (4)

Typically, mainstream culture understands and accepts this appropriation of cool without critical hesitancy. For example, a 2000 print ad for Clothestime, a clothing outlet located throughout the U.S., offers in a mailing and newspaper supplement a rebate card under the slogan "Now Getting Carded is Cool." The "card" in question gets stamped with every purchase of $20 or more at regional Clothestime stores. After six stamps, customers get a free T-shirt. As the Clothestime ad demonstrates through its slogan, though, to be cool is to go against the norm, to be outside of society, to transgress, or at least to present the image of transgression whether such activity takes place or not. The Clothestime advertisement removes rebellion from a teenage context and packages it for sale. Clothestime puts into practice what Mark Dery calls "the semiotics of nonconformity." As Dery states, "the bar-code consciousness of mass culture is parried by a 'nonconformity' fashioned, ironically, from the conspicuous consumption of brands that have earned the elusive youth-culture approbation 'cool'" (*The Pyrotechnic Insanitarium* 185).

A similar move to Clothestime has been made by the .TV web hosting service whose commercials highlight the word cool. One ad presents a series of "cool" and "not cool" images over the soundtrack of Richard Strauss' "Blue Danube"; only instead of being an instrumental, the song's rhythm is replaced by the persistent repetition of the word cool. Another .TV advertisement features a shirtless James Dean promoting its product to a young audience. "James Dean was cool," the ad declares. "There was no

cooler name than James Dean." After several images of Dean posing, the commercial concludes with the statement, "This moment of cool was brought to you by .TV." Dean the figure is replaced by Dean the name, the symbol of rebellious youth, the cultural marker indicating the too fast to live/too young to die motif that teenage consumption buys into. Through the image of Dean, consumerism adopts the logic of cool as it is employed in popular culture figures. Writing about Dean in 1964, Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel observed, "James Dean portrayed the ideal of blue-jean innocence, tough and vulnerable in the same moment, a scowl of disbelief struggling with frankness for mastery in his face and eyes, continual changes of mood and expression on his features" that mark "that style of 'cool' indifference – a kind of bland knowingness about the ways of the world, even, at times, a disenchantment, an assumed world-weariness" (Hall and Whannel 283-284). Dean's look encapsulates the charged teenage emotion we have come to recognize as cool in popular expression and which has been picked by advertising.

> The culture provided by the commercial entertainment market therefore plays a crucial role. It mirrors attitudes and sentiments which are already there, and at the same time provides an expressive field and set of symbols through which these attitudes can be projected. But it also gives those attitudes a certain stress and shape, particularizing a background of feelings by the choice of a certain style of dress, a particular look, by the way a typical emotion is rendered in a song or depicted in a drawing or photograph. (Hall and Whannel 276)

Recognition of the connection between consumerism and teenage attitudes is foregrounded in Grace and Fred Hechinger's 1963 *Teen Age-Tyranny*. The Hechingers' study of teenage behavior finds rebellion and affluence as co-contributors to "teenage maturity symbols" of smoking, drinking, and cars, in which function gives way to image. Cars, for instance, shed utilitarian values for iconic appearance. These symbols, the authors argue, are the result of both comfort and restlessness; they reflect the desire "to

want more and to attach extraordinary importance not only to material possessions but to the status-giving competition of out-owning one's neighbor" (Hechinger and Hechinger 197). The relationship between commercialism and teenage style, however, doesn't always have to be negative. Dick Hebdige, for instance, understands the symbols of youth culture as always open to recontextualization, in critical as well as commercial manners. For Hebdige, subculture (what we might categorize as one producer of cool) is a "meaning of style" "pregnant with significance." Cars, safety pins, clothes "are gestures, movements towards a speech which offends the 'silent majority,' which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus" (*Subculture* 18) and which, in the end, might remain tools of social critique yet still become products of a consumer industry (as the punk movement, the focus of his study, eventually did).

The symbols of youth culture dominant in both the market place and teenage lifestyles complement recent studies of youth and consumerism. Andrew Ross indicates as such by arguing that "the fantasy of youth has imploded upon itself, transforming delinquency into a luxury, in accord with the voracious demands of a consumer society" (Ross and Rose 9). Similarly, Malcolm Gladwell's "The Coolhunt" highlights how fashion trends market cool to young shoppers, a point also emphasized by Douglas Rushkoff in his PBS documentary *Merchants of Cool*. Gladwell reports how hip merchandise managers of clothing and sneaker companies (i.e., coolhunters) track new styles which at first might seem rebellious, but soon become the norm.

> Ask a coolhunter where the baggy-jeans look came from, for example, and you might get any number of answers: urban black kids mimicking the jailhouse look, skateboarders trying not to look like skiers, or alternatively, all three at once, in some grand concordance. (Gladwell 80)

Youth and consumerism join forces to proliferate the meaning of cool. Gladwell discovers that cool is built out of a nostalgia for rebellion socially constructed from the image of '50s and '80s street culture, a desire to recreate the feeling of owning Trans Ams, riding BMXs, and wearing Converse sneakers. "[Cool is] about chase and flight – designers and retailers and the mass consumer giving chase to the elusive prey of street cool" (Gladwell 78). Gladwell's observation materializes in television advertisements like the GAP's "Cool Khakis," which nostalgically draws upon the packaged rebellion of *West Side Story*. The ad replaces the film's street toughs with khaki wearing teenagers (accompanying girls wear fluorescent retro shirts) dancing against a sanitized prison backdrop to Leonard Bernstein's song from the film, "Cool." As Polly Esther of Suck.com makes clear, cool results from the ways past consumer habits and media representations are reappropriated into new ones.

> Go to one of those used furniture stores, the ones with the shitty furniture from the '70s that's marked up to '90s prices! Pick out the ugliest, most outrageous stuff, preferably in powder blue or avocado, and pay way, way, way too much for it! Voila! Instant cool! (Esther)

Indeed, popular perceptions of cool revolve around how these concepts connect to youth culture, the transgressors and purveyors of consumer idealism. This version of cool's origins resides in the American 1950s. The concept of "cool youth" has become synonymous with the image of teenage rebellion created in 1950s filmic representations like *American Graffiti* (made in 1972, but which takes place at the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963), *The Wild One*, *Rebel Without A Cause*, and *The Black Board Jungle*. In these films, youth feel constrained by society's norms and express themselves as cool: as being outside the regulations meant to govern civil behavior (like the Clothestime ad which understands that "getting carded" is a product of a restrictive society's beliefs

regarding alcohol consumption). These films contributed to an understanding of the alienated teenage rebel later depicted in mainstay rock and roll songs of the early '60s like The Crystals' "He's a Rebel" (1962), Elvis Presley's "The Devil in Disguise" (1963), and The Shangri-Las' "Leader of the Pack" (1964). Such songs helped shape the overall image of figures like Brando and Dean as the epitome of cool. They also served as soundtracks to 1960s underground cinema's critique of the cool figure as fetish.

In addition, the rebellious characters in 1950s mainstream film usually express attitudes shaped by African-American culture, a culture itself positioned in the margins of institutional notions of "regulated behavior." The legacy of slavery and Jim Crow pushed African-Americans outside of mainstream culture into positions of marginality often interpreted as exotic and, therefore, cool. The racially ambiguous Wolfman Jack in *American Graffiti* functions as the fictional cool figure. Elusive and detached from the city's borders (he broadcasts from an unknown location on an outlaw frequency) Wolfman Jack commands interest from the film's white teenagers who interpret him as beyond the law. Thirteen year old Carole tells John Milner, "I just love listening to Wolfman Jack. My mom won't let me because he's a Negro."

Carole's remark echoes Norman Mailer's concept of the "White Negro," described in his 1957 essay of the same name. For Mailer, white, suburban teenagers dissatisfied with post World War II lifestyles "drifted out at night looking for action with a black man's code to fit [their] facts. The hipster had absorbed the existentialist synopses of the Negro, and for practical purposes could be considered a white Negro" (Mailer 273). Mailer felt that suburban whites, bored with the predictability settling in after a traumatic war that brought both the Holocaust and nuclear bombings of Japan into

American cultural vocabulary, sought out black culture as exciting and "orgasmic," as a release to living the complacent American dream. Although racist for its description of African-American culture as sexual and primitive, Mailer's "White Negro" set the pace for a comprehensive 1950s view of teenage cool as informed by African-American style, music, and speech. Slang plays a determining role in shaping cool, a point stressed by Marshall McLuhan. "Slang offers an immediate index to changing perception. Slang is based not on theories but on immediate experience" (*Understanding Media* viii). For Geneva Smitherman, cool is rooted not only in language, but in the African-American music that shapes slang.

> The whole notion of "cool talk" that has come to be associated with the music world suggests a heroic posture of calmness and control, a kind of Hemingwayesque grace under pressure, which was and is vitally necessary for a black man or woman in White American, who's often tested, much arrested, but rarely blessted. Black musicians are cool par-excellence as they style and profile to the max. (*Talkin and Testifyin* 52 )

The point is further extended by Joel Dinnerstein, who explains cool as originating in musical style, particularly in key jazz figures who constructed a language of attitude in addition to the sounds they created.

> Contemporary American usage of the word "cool" has its roots in the jazz culture of the early 1940s, and the legendary tenor saxophonist Lester Young probably used it first to refer to a state of mind. When Young said, "I'm cool" or "that's cool," he meant "I'm calm," "I'm OK with that," or just "I'm keeping it together in here." (Dinnerstein 239)

According to the editors of *Cool Places*, a contemporary collection of essays on the geographical places youth culture seeks out, cool youth no longer feel only attracted to African-American culture and rebellion. Instead, the global realities resulting from economic and cultural influence in our highly digital age have created a hybrid notion of cool. Teenagers borrow from past attitudes and stylistics, but eventually seek solace in

the global arena. However, as the editors note, the media representations cool youth bring

with them to the global scene have their origins in 1950s cultural patterns.

> Academic study of "youth" as a distinctive social category became
> established during the 1950s and 1960s in the United States and Britain.
> The history of academic research about youth cultures reflects and
> reinforces the public condemnation of working class adolescents.
> Academic interest in teenagers was born within criminology, fuelled by
> moral panics concerning the nuisance value of young people on the urban
> streets of Western societies. (Skelton and Valentine 10)

*Cool Places* recontextualizes media representation of youth in the hope of negating the

myth of teenage rebellion as central to cool. The aim is a positive reflection on how

youth culture negotiates its position in the global arena: in raves, GRRRL culture, the

workplace, and non-American locales. Skelton and Valentine believe that to understand

how youth culture functions, one must geographically map the places youth visit. Their

thesis resembles Liu's Laws of Cool, which maps electronic places of visitation, or even

the commercial prospects of Clothestime, which attempt to map youth culture through its

retail stores.

What we learn from either the electronic usage of the word cool or the popular

understanding of cool as rebellion is that this particular word fuels a certain cultural

response. These definitions, however, do not extend our understanding of cool as

rhetoric. They tell us that within vernacular culture cool has become a term indicative of

emotion, style, attitude, and web design, but not how the various elements interact in

order to construct discourse. These representations of cool say that there is something

about the Web, consumerism, and youth culture that complements or drives traditional

notions of cool, but they do not tell us how one writes cool. The challenge for

contemporary pedagogy and cultural study is to resituate these popular versions of cool within the context of writing.

## 1963

The story of cool doesn't begin, but becomes meaningful, in 1963. When Eric Havelock attempted to understand the transformation from oral to alphabetic cultures, he found that in the time period leading up to and including 1963 the near simultaneous publication of several works interested in the history of writing (*La Pensé Sauvage* by Lévi-Strauss, "The Consequences of Literacy" by Jack Goody and Ian Watt, *Animal Species and Evolution* by Ernst Mayr, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* by Marshall McLuhan, and *Preface to Plato* by Havelock) highlighted a renewed interest in how writing defines culture. We might extend Havelock's observations on writing by including an electronic perspective such as Douglas Englebart's 1963 publication "A Conceptual Framework for Augmenting Man's Intellect," an essay which outlined an early conception of hypertext and the windows system of displaying text on a computer screen. Or we might add to Havelock's list composition's 1963 evaluations of writing: the influential meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) which set out a strategy to redefine composition as well as the 1963 publications of Albert Kitzhaber's *Themes, Theories, and Therapies* and Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer's *Research in Written Composition*, two texts published in response to the conference's demands for new writing methodologies. To include these temporal events is to work within Havelock's overall notion that "The year 1963 provides a convenient watershed date: or perhaps better a date when a dam in the modern consciousness appears

to burst, releasing a flood of startled recognitions of a host of related facts" (*Muse Learns to Write* 24).

When we append a cultural dimension to grammatology we see that 1963 involves other "startled recognitions." In the time period leading up to and including 1963, three writers in three different fields of study employed the same term, cool, to define their observations regarding cultural formations and patterns. Interested in how electronic communication reshapes thought and experience, Marshall McLuhan employed cool to describe the high-participatory nature of certain media forms (TV, the telephone, comic books) as opposed to the low-participatory characteristic of other forms he called "hot" (film, radio, print). At the same time, Amiri Baraka used "cool" to describe the African-American reaction to a white, oppressive authority as calm, non-involved, detached. Meanwhile, Robert Farris Thompson, working in West Africa, discovered that African-American terms like "cool" have their origins in indigenous, African societies such as the Yoruba, who use it to express in art and aesthetics a lifestyle characteristic of appeasement, conciliation, and calmness.

What does it mean to find one term emerging in three distinct fields of study (technology, cultural studies, and writing--in the form of aesthetics)? Why 1963? Why cool? How does such an observation function when juxtaposed with Havelock's indication of 1963 as an important moment within the history of writing? What do such juxtapositions do as heuristics? In the electronic age, writing adapts the logic of juxtaposition as a tool for developing new experiences. Demonstrated in photomontage and montage, in Modernist poetry, in advertising, and more recently in hypertext and digital sampling, juxtaposition (often in the form of collage) offers writers and readers

access to new meanings in found work. To consider three separate definitions of the same term simultaneously, then, is to continue the tradition of collage and to treat the term as a found object resituated within a new context: the history of writing. Cool, in turn, functions as a tool for expanding our comprehension of writing within the context of other disciplines; it enhances Havelock's vision of 1963 as a watershed date. Consequently, the task becomes to develop this specific juxtaposition of cool in order to allow for a greater understanding of such a logic as it might translate in composition pedagogy. In other words, can the juxtaposition of the three separate definitions of cool shed light on how one teaches writing in the highly electronic twenty-first century? By juxtaposing the individual practices of composition studies, cultural studies, and technology, can we define a rhetoric of cool?

Popular culture's obsession with cool demands a breakdown of the term along the lines of what Raymond Williams did for the word "culture." Encountering the term in everyday conversation as well as in the university in late 1940s England, Williams saw discrepancies in the usage of culture, differences that at times emphasized the word's multiple meanings or ignored them. "The very fact that [culture] was important in two areas that are often thought of as separate posed new questions and suggested new kinds of connection," Williams wrote (*Keywords* 14). His answer to dealing with the differences in meaning was the text *Keywords*, an important work for cultural studies that provides etymological, historical, and social meanings to widely used terms. This dissertation addresses a similar need: the mapping out of a rhetoric of cool that will allow educators and students of contemporary culture a place to understand the ways cool both

supports and undermines consumer culture, the ways it derives from racial and ideological positions, and the ways cool shapes contemporary discourse.

While these definitions of cool I have begun to address do not entirely classify (at least on their own) what I will call a "rhetoric of cool," they do acknowledge that contemporary culture identifies itself in relation to this term, and it does so within the broader perspective of popular culture. And within the context of the institution called the university, the students we encounter belong to the norms and habits of popular culture. As Gregory Ulmer points out, the challenge for pedagogy is to resituate its practices within the framework of popular culture and, in particular, attitudes like cool. For Ulmer, cool is one of many discourses used to make sense of the world as they are created within cultural institutions. Cool emerges from the discourse of entertainment. Family, church, and school are other institutions which produce discourse. Ulmer names the framework which ties together these areas the popcycle. The popcycle demands that scholastic practices include attitudes like cool within their curriculums.

> School may no more stop the spread of funky reason than could the Church suppress science by threat of torture. Funk as a metaphysics is not yet in the Schools but its circulation through the popcycle is well underway from its origins in the Street (a fifth institution of the popcycle, with the bar as its site of appearance) through Entertainment, where it has merged with technology and capitalism. The younger generation is assimilating aesthetically the atmosphere of Funk through a taste for being "cool." Perhaps the hybrid predicted by this riddle will produce a new institution called Chool, whose methodology will promote a kind of objective fashion. ("I Untied" 588)

The institution of Chool Ulmer calls for might be defined as a rhetoric. Within English studies, the institutional practice I am most concerned with is the discipline of composition. Composition, of course, centers around the teaching of rhetorical practices. Ciceronian rhetorical strategies of *inventio* (invention), *disposito* (disposition), *elocutio*

(diction), *memoria* (memory), and *actio* (delivery) make up the bulk of contemporary rhet/comp studies (with *elocutio* falling by the wayside). Invention, Ernst Robert Curtius wrote in the 1950s, breaks down further into exposition, narrative, evidence, refutation of opposing opinions, and conclusion (Curtius 70), what we currently might recognize as the form of the argument taught in so many rhet/comp handbooks[12].

Rhetoric, art critic Dave Hickey claims, connects to cool through Cicero. Designating cool as the declaration of "some truth to be evident on one's own embodied authority as a citizen, without deigning to invest it with fancy justifications, personal explanations, or expressive urgency," Hickey integrates cool into Ciceronian rhetoric through its definition as a calm, detached, and removed state. Referencing the rhetorician's *De Oratore*, Hickey remarks,

> The author declares that he can enter the Forum at its far end and, observing a speaker on the podium from that distance (over a hundred yards), without hearing a word, ascertain the quality, effectiveness, and justice of the speaker's case. From this example, Cicero derives his concept of the idea orator -- the orator who need not speak at all. (Hickey 12)

Isolating invention from the Ciceronian breakdown, Ulmer finds it to be the basis of a hyperrhetoric that replaces logic with inference, that shifts deduction and induction to the electronic equivalent he calls "conduction." Conduction brings "together writing and intuition" ("The Miranda Warnings" 346). Intuition marks the place where juxtapositions are determined. Why one joins together elements, why one links, are the result of intuition. With this in mind, I want to think about how my initial juxtaposition of

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[12] *The Little Brown Reader*, for instance, teaches that the following must be included in an argument in order: background, reader's perceptions, the thesis, the evidence, the counter evidence, responses to counterclaims and counter evidence or refutation, a reaffirmation or conclusion (83). *The New Century Handbook* offers similar instruction, but narrows down the requirements to: develop a thesis, generate

cool in 1963 might append the teaching of composition and lead to the creation of a rhetoric of cool. We know that cool is understood to some degree by the students in our classrooms; therefore, a rhetoric of cool begins with a familiar position. The task is to add the cultural schemes that students are not yet aware of (issues raised by cultural study and technology) – hence the 1963 juxtaposition. To teach writing, we must then begin from our student's cultural position with the intent to append the developments of 1963.

1963 serves as a place to examine cool's implications for literacy in the electronic age. Reading cool across three distinct disciplines parallels Ulmer's understandings of how literacy shifts within electronic culture to a new literate practice he terms *electracy*. According to Ulmer, in the digital, literacy's traditional places of argumentation, the Aristotelian *topos,* are replaced with *chora*, an argumentative strategy functioning "by means of pattern making, pattern recognition, pattern generation. It is not that memory is no longer thought of as 'place,' but that the notion itself of spatiality has changed" (*Heuretics* 36). For Ulmer, "choral writing organizes any manner of information by means of the writer's specific position in the time and space of a culture" (*Heuretics* 33). Ulmer names this electronic writing practice "chorography" and offers a set of instructions for how to be a chorographer: "do not choose between the different meanings of key terms, but compose by using all the meanings" (*Heuretics* 48).

By working with three definitions of cool simultaneously, I venture out on my own version of chorography, one informed by Ulmer's work with electracy and poststructuralism in general, and one which I call the rhetoric of cool. Choosing all of the meanings of cool directs me as to how to write this dissertation. I will allow all three

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supporting evidence, take note of alternative views, test the main points and structure the argument (which includes establishing background and conclusive material) (1112-129).

terms from 1963 to serve as a guide for my understanding of electronic writing. In turn, the dissertation will utilize 1963 as an organizing principle[13] in order to demonstrate the ways the rhetoric of cool operates in electronic writing. Doing so forces me to consider myself along the lines of Jerry Lewis in the 1963 film *The Nutty Professor*. Lewis' character is an academic geek (marked by goofy mannerisms and heavy dark glasses) who assumes a cool alter ego (indicated by his Frank Sinatra smoothness with both ladies and alcohol) to compensate for his nerdliness. Lewis' character emphasizes a personal point for me by way of Cab Calloway's *Cab Calloway's Cat-ologue: A Hepster's Dictionary*. Calloway, the great bandleader of the 1930s, describes anyone who is unhip as "not wise to the jive, an icky, a jeff, a square" incidentally naming me (identifying my first name) as unhip, or what we might call, uncool, a geek, a nerd (Calloway). Today, those involved with computers are deemed geeks or nerds. The connection between the geek and cool is a point not lost on Macintosh co-founder Bill Aktinson who states that "Geeks are cats who dig a special kind of cool. It's the newest cool, the cool of the new – and there's nothing sleeker, shinier, and newer than the human race's latest scientific intuitions that alter the universe" (qtd in Katz xii). My pedagogy concentrates on how we write with computers. To be a nerd in the twenty-first century is analogous to being the nerd in 1963, only the need to create alter egos has vanished, replaced with what I might call "nerdly" writing, hypertextual composition practices, or even more immediately, a

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[13] My isolation of 1963 might prompt a critique of this project as New Historicism. Unlike New Historicism, however, my aim is not to "suggest hidden links between high cultural texts, apparently detached from any direct engagement with their immediate surroundings, and texts very much in and of their world, such as documents of social control or political subversion" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 10). New Historicism reveals parallel ideas in both literature and history. It seeks to prove, for example, how a moment in a Shakespearian play allows for a similar historical reading of the same time period. Instead, my treatment of 1963 owes itself to the projects of Walter Benjamin, the Surrealists, and William S. Burroughs, who used found objects to rethink cultural relationships through the medium of collage.

nerdly dissertation. I, then, position myself as a contemporary nutty professor (or teacher) proposing an alternative rhetorical approach to writing.

## Baudrillard

The theory behind this project comes from Jean Baudrillard. In *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, Baudrillard presents his ideas regarding signification and simulation as an understanding of current discourse in which "symbolic exchange is no longer the organizing principle of modern society" (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 1). Instead, simulation becomes an instrument by which culture establishes discourse. Simulation belongs to a history of simulacra.

> - The *counterfeit* is the dominant schema in the "classical" period, from the Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution.
> - *Production* is the dominant schema in the industrial era.
> - *Simulation* is the dominant schema in the current code-governed phase.
> (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 50)

Under the contemporary framework of simulation, Baudrillard proposes that electronic communication replaces signification with commutation as a system of exchange. Baudrillard claims that the electronic age leads to the replacement of symbolic exchange with commutability. "From now on, signs are exchanged against each other rather than against the real;" signs have become "totally indeterminate, in the structural or combinatory play which succeeds the previous rule of determinate equivalence" (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 7). In commutation, referentiality is replaced by a system where signs are exchanged against each other instead of the real. Signs, then, become reversible, commutable, and exchangeable without dependence on referents. Determinate meanings yield to indeterminacy. "There has been an extermination (in the literal sense of the word) of the real of production and the real of signification" (*Symbolic Exchange and*

*Death* 7). Borrowing from McLuhan, Baudrillard labels this activity "cool," a discourse which "is the pure play of the values of discourse and the commutations of writing."

> It is the ease and aloofness of what now only really plays with codes, signs, and words, the omnipotence of operational simulation. To whatever extent affects of systems of reference remain, they remain hot. Any "message" keeps us in the hot. We enter the cool era when the medium becomes the message. (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 22)

Hot signifies the stage of representation; cool becomes simulation. Marked by patterns of repetition and the series, cool is the hyperreal, the moment where "the real is not only that which can be reproduced, but that which is always already reproduced" (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 73).

Baudrillard's understanding of cool as a discursive place within electronic culture situates my project within the framework of 1963. The simultaneous overlap of writing as aesthetic, technology, and cultural formation becomes a focal point for Baudrillard. By way of Baudrillard, I can begin with examples of "cool" discourse from all three areas; I can set up a template for how cool functions within various media outputs. At the level of aesthetics, Baudrillard indicates Andy Warhol's series paintings as exemplarily of cool. "Here the paradigmatic dimension is abolished along with the syntagmatic dimension, since there is no longer a flexion of forms, nor even an internal reflexion, only a contiguity of the same: zero degree flexion and reflexion" (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 72-73). Warhol's usage of the series stands out in 1963 as a place where the repetitive nature of iconic writing becomes pushed to the foreground. In 1963, Andy Warhol established The Factory, ground zero for the Pop Art Movement's activity in New York's Greenwich Village. Working with silk screening and film, Warhol commutated the basic element of entertainment, celebrity, into a writing practice. During

the same year, Warhol produced two works incorporating the serial and iconic as places where celebrity culture manifests as a means of expression: *Four Marilyns* and *Double Elvis*. Warhol's usage of repetition often structured itself around the icon, a notion integral to cool. In Warhol's work, the cool figure (or any figure for that matter) is displayed in a cool medium. *Four Marilyns*, for example, demonstrates the effect iconic patterning has on visual discourse.

> This series of "Marilyns" demonstrates the reproducibility of any body, image, or event as graphic commodity and the redundancy of mass-mediated iconographic processes. These processes desire a subject easily imaged and recognized. Once imaged, an icon can be reproduced; once reproduced, it can be placed on a variety of sites. The icon is divorced from its context; indeed it becomes its own context. (Baty 69)

Warhol's interests in seriality stem from technological innovations in the post war period. The "Factory," the institutional place of mass production, became transformed into a showroom of not only the post war demands of American consumer culture brought on by the development of highways, the construction of shopping centers, and an extended population move to the suburbs, but also the creation of a discourse of mass produced, serial expression originating in an everyday interaction with the products of the entertainment, information, and political industries. In Warhol's Factory, "the techniques of standardization, repetition, and assembly-line throughput were used to assemble not complex finished products but literal replicas of what was already there, more or less unaltered" (Wollen 163).

Baudrillard also notes that technology (particularly computers) creates a writing based on repetition. In the digital, binary codes are reproduced through series of zeros and ones, "the core of the processes of simulation that dominate us" (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 69). Computer simulation can be read as the blurring of the boundaries of

representation, the impeding threat of virtual reality, what computer enthusiast Howard

Rheingold warns as reality "disappearing behind a screen" (*Virtual Reality* 19) and what

writer Nile Southern theorizes (and satirizes) in *The Anarchivists of Eco-Dub* as a place

in which

> People had lost the power of critical thinking, going along with the premise that a simulated existence was more "bottom line" than the real thing. The walls between consumer, product and lifestyle disappeared altogether – it was now simply a matter of daily immersion. (Southern 57)

In the virtual world, software programs like Adobe Photoshop allow for image

manipulation; video games create simulated universes of adventure where character and

role player mix. As Darren Tofts argues, digital imaging defines Baudrillard's cool

simulacra as collage. It does so through the tradition of twentieth century artistic

practices that support "strategies of appropriation, sampling and recombination." Tofts

states:

> With digitization, recombinant processes such as sampling and collage enter into an entirely new realm of possibility. By its very nature binary data is highly susceptible to change, manipulation, and reconstitution. It's so easy to touch up, correct, alter, distort, falsify, tamper with and improve digital images, as well as deftly conceal all the seams and signs of manipulation. (*Parallax* 92)

In cyberspace, Margaret Morse suggests, this vision of an always manipulative virtual

reality fashions an exchangeable system of codes from which discourse is created.

> The contemporary notion of *virtual reality* as a subset of cyberspace is an extreme example of the substitution of the material world for an immaterial and symbolic one. In virtual reality, the user electronically wraps him – or herself in symbols by means of electronic clothing [like head displays] producing the illusion of inhabiting the virtual world displayed inside the fold. (Morse 17)

The virtual exists as a place where commutated computer codes change the nature

of signification. Manipulation of computer code leads to a new discursive experience,

one, according to Baudrillard (and Morse), that allows the participants of discourse to restructure the nature of communication. It is an experience alike McLuhan's understandings of television in 1963:

> Because the low definition of TV insures a high degree of audience involvement, the most effective programs are those that present situations which consist of some process to be completed. (*Understanding Media* 278)

McLuhan read television as "cool" because of its mosaic nature – the broken lines of the TV image have to be reconstructed by the viewer; the codes have to be manipulated even at a basic level. I will discuss McLuhan at greater length within this chapter. Currently, the Web and virtual reality simulations increase that very nature of interaction McLuhan found essential to cool.

Finally, Baudrillard notes that cool transfers into cultural areas of discourse, notably in graffiti, as the codes of popular culture (like Baudrillard's examples of SUPERKOOL KOOL KILLER ACE) are commutated into names distinct from any system of referentiality (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 76). Drawn from popular TV shows of the '60s and '70s, comic character names, and Kung Fu movies, graffiti names rework codes into new forms. Graffiti artists like Fab 5 Freddy engage in writing systems where the symbols of popular culture are easily exchangeable for one another. As music theorist Kodwo Eshun states, "Fab 5 Freddy redefines Graffiti as Calligraffiti, just one name among many: Iconografix, Aeroglyphics and Aerosoul Art all presume an extensive training in exclusive symbol systems" (Eshun 30). Graffiti artists adapt the techniques of collage to recontextualize popular culture characters, icons, and sayings into a new method of communication created by technological capability. Tricia Rose explains that graffiti themes include

> Hip hop slang, characterizations of b-boys, rap lyrics, and hip hop fashion
> Using logos and images borrowed from television, comic books, and
> cartoons, stylistic signatures, and increasingly difficult executions, writers
> expanded graffiti's palette. These stylistic developments were aided by
> advances in marker and spray paint technology; better spraying nozzles,
> marking fibers, paint adhesion, and texture enhanced the range of
> expression in graffiti writing. (Rose 42)

Graffiti, Rose states, is a post-literate composition practice. A writing system based on

commutation, graffiti is cool writing, a form of expression allowing for social interaction

where interaction often is discouraged (the inner city). Just as graffiti answers a cultural

need by resorting to collagist techniques under a technological framework, I, too, adapt a

similar strategy in setting up the form of this project.

## Collage

The juxtaposition of the three areas of discourse borrowed from Baudrillard

(writing, technology, culture) parallels my juxtaposition of cool in 1963. Baudrillard's

notion of cool read at the level of juxtaposition grants me a method for my project –

collage. The importance of artistic practices like collage to the study of writing becomes

emphasized as the rhetoric of cool is explained. The initial juxtapositions recognized by

Havelock and Baudrillard teach by model, and that model is collage. By way of the

juxtaposition of unlike image and text, collage denotes the transfer of words and images

from their original context in order to question the nature of referentiality. "For each

element in the collage has a dual function: it refers to an external reality even as its

compositional thrust is to undercut the very referentiality it seems to assert" (Perloff 10).

I define collage by way of Francis Brow's 1963 *Collage*. Collage, from the French, *collé*,

is the "pasting or gluing; specifically pasting paper, cloth, etc. into pictures or objects; the

artistic product of this process." Montage, on the other hand, is the "process of combining

pictorial elements from several sources so that elements are both distinct and blended into an over-all artistic production" (Brow 5).

This dissertation will work from the position of collage; it will juxtapose unlike events from three areas of 1963 (culture, technology, and writing) in order to produce an electronic rhetoric that I call "cool." Cool, then, becomes a collagist practice. My intention is to apply and test this method of juxtaposition while I investigate what a rhetoric of cool entails. By rhetoric, I mean the strategies employed by and language of the items I will juxtapose. As the dissertation unfolds, and as it examines various moments from 1963, the characteristics of those moments will teach me the rhetoric of cool.

As I develop my understanding of cool, I will provide my own juxtapositions. By working from arbitrary found moments, I will demonstrate how the juxtapositions become motivated; that is, the juxtaposition of unrelated temporal moments (those occurring around and in 1963) leads to a new understanding of how disciplines interact under the guise of association and pattern formation. Brow instructs aspiring collagists that "the best way to learn the art of collage is by experimentation" (Brow 16). Thus, my juxtapositions exemplify the academic writing experiment, treating the date 1963 as well as events within that date as material for use in a collage.

Collage operates through the concept of parataxis, that "anything can appear in the collage that is an attribute of the recipient or refers to him in some way. Moreover, items could be eliminated and others added without, so to speak, spoiling the plot" (Perloff 8). Most understand the relationship between collage and technology by way of the desktop publishing metaphor of cut and paste. A majority of word processors use

icons of scissors and glue (or clipboards for the gluing) to facilitate users' ability to move text around. Cutting and pasting, of course, is how one creates a collage (scissors and glue are among Brow's essential tools for collage composition). The choice of the cut and paste metaphor for computer designers of word processing programs is indicative of collage's origin in mid-nineteenth century technological innovations, a point emphasized by Eddie Wolfram in his history of collagist practices. "During the nineteenth century mass-production and the technologies of the machine age provided new materials for collage" (Wolfram 9). The invention of the camera, for instance, introduced not only ways to represent reality accurately, but also ways to distort representation. In the mid-nineteenth century, an early photomontage technique called *carte de visite* quickly followed the technology's invention. "Its format involved the cut and paste method to group a host of celebrity portraits into a tightly packed single frame image" (Phillips 26). With the camera, the celebrity figure as cut and pasted "code" exchangeable in various formations became the product of a technologized culture. By the 1930s and 1940s, advancements in photographic technology led to critical applications of collage including the photomontage works of Soviet propaganda as well as the work of German artists like Hannah Hoch and John Heartfield who juxtaposed various images and artifacts of consumer culture to critique Nazi ideology.

Outside of photography, early twentieth century practices of collage reacted to technological innovations by reincorporating past aesthetics into new discursive practices. Picasso's found material derived from African ritual masks while Filippo Marinetti's Italian Futurists movement revised the manifesto format through the inspiration of technology and machinery. The Futurists were "the first artistic movement

to recognize the radical effects that the machine age and technological inventions in communication were to have on the fabric of life as well as art" (Wolfram 36). The rule which guided the Futurists was "decomposition" – "a collage principle; simultaneism, dismemberment, 'the scattering and fusion of details freed from accepted logic' – all these are corollaries of the questioning of mimesis" (Perloff 20). The Futurists preempted questions later raised by Marshall McLuhan, asking how the individual manipulation of technological production challenged dominant modes of discourse. They inquired "how can traditional discourse with its complete sentences – the 'prison of the Latin period' – convey this new language of telephones, phonographs, airplanes, the cinema, the great newspaper, which Marinetti calls 'the synthesis of a day in the world's life'?" (Perloff 25)

By the late '50s and early '60s, collagist practices began to incorporate the commercial as an aesthetic. As Baudrillard would later declare, the post war period led to the replacement of Marxist notions of production (dominant within any discussion of capitalism and commercialization) with the electronic logic of reproduction.

> A revolution has put an end to [Marx's] "classical" economics of value, a revolution of value itself, which carries value beyond its commodity form into its radical form. (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 6)

Thus, in 1963, we get Warhol's Marilyns and Lichenstein's comic book paintings, works opting to remove commodity fetish from its means of production in order to discuss how cultural fascination with commercialism becomes a form of discourse. Pop Art introduces cool as visual expression.

> Abstract expressionist painting was emotional, intuitive, spontaneous, autographic, personal, serious and morally committed – in short, a "hot" or romantic style. American pop painting, by contrast, was unemotional,

> deliberate, systematic, impersonal , ironic, detached, non-autographic, and amoral – a "cool" or classical style. (Walker 31)

For the Pop Artists, the commutation of the advertisement and commercial image undercuts the political or ideological problems located within advertising. For example, George Segal's *Cinema*, a 1963 work of a plaster figure filling in the details of a movie marquee, comments on the nature of the film industry's presence in everyday life, the dominance of screen celebrity and voyeuristic viewing habits. Similarly, in Robert Rauschenberg's 1963 *Barge*, "The black and white silkscreen print was a happy reduction of means perfectly in line with 'popular' aesthetics. The effect of *Barge*, which is thirty-three feet long, is like sitting in the front row of the cinema watching an old back-and-white film" (Wolfram 165). The products of the entertainment industry like black and white movies, celebrities, and comics were recognized as part of cultural expression subject to usage within daily vocabulary. When Mimmo Rotella introduced *Marilyn Décollage* in 1963, Rotella, like Warhol, offered the "idea of using ad-mass posters and graffiti in art as rehabilitation of the real world" (Wolfram 147). Only for Rotella, the method was decollage. Decollage is not a combination of elements, but a practice in which multiple layers are gradually removed; torn layers of posters are reassembled as a new composition. Unravel Marilyn and obsession with celebrity reveals itself. Such is my method as well. I remove the layers of meaning cool carries to see what lays beneath.

Collage restructures cultural awareness of how discourse forms, the way instruments of technology and entertainment shape expression. Collage challenges assumptions regarding referentiality by recontextualizing the elements already familiar within everyday discourse. Similar to Richard Hamilton, John McHale and John

Yoelker's usage of Marilyn Monroe in their 1956 showing of *Robbie the Robot* at the Whitechapel Gallery exhibition in London, collagist practices within the late twentieth century have highlighted the role of the icon and questioned its referential status within communication. "The robot carried an unconscious girl, scantily clad, and superimposed onto this was a movie still of Marilyn Monroe in her famous scene from *The Seven-Year Itch* with skirt blown high. This is was the first time that Marilyn, who was to become the high-priestess of pop imagery (along with Elizabeth Taylor), appeared in this 'new super-realism'" (Wolfram 159). The difference between Marilyn Monroe, the actress, and Marilyn Monroe, the icon, is the difference between symbolic exchange and simulation. Pop Art's usage of the icon allowed collage new opportunities to challenge notions of representation. In 1963, Tom Wolfe hears from a magazine editor that Abstract Expressionism is dead, and Pop Art has taken over. For Wolfe,

> the comics, labels, and trademarks that the Pop artists like were not representations of external reality. They were commonplace 'sign systems' of American culture. By enlarging them and putting them on canvas, the artists were converting them from messages into something that was neither message nor external image. (Wolfe 82-83)

Whereas Fredric Jameson condemns the abandonment of referentiality in postmodern culture as the seeking of history "by way of our own pop images and simulacra of that history, which itself remains forever out of reach" (*Postmodernism* 71), collage offers an alternative as to how such "simulacra" function as critical gestures. In the electronic age, collage offers an organization principle for dealing with iconicity in critical ways. Jameson's dismissal of pastiche as non-historical, as a method of examining "the 'past' through stylistic connotation, conveying 'pastness' by the glossy qualities of the image" (*Postmodernism* 67) becomes the question of this project. Does

the juxtaposition of unlike images and texts provide merely a "glossy" stylistic devoid of content? Or do such juxtapositions allow for a rhetorical strategy suitable to electronic culture? What is the current place of referentiality within electronic writing?

Pastiche, unlike collage and montage, is not about the juxtaposition of unlike elements in order to question the referentiality it asserts. Pastiche is, though, about the usage of image without referent. For Jameson, such a methodology becomes questionable since in pastiche "the past as 'referent' finds itself gradually bracketed, and then effaced altogether, leaving us with nothing but texts" (*Postmodernism* 66). Pastiche removes the object, the referent, from a historical context.

> What is more interesting, and more problematical, are the ultimate attempts, through this new discourse, to lay siege either to our own present and immediate past, or to a more distant history that escapes individual existential memory. Faced with these ultimate objects – our social, historical, and existential present, and the past as "referent" – the incompatibility of a postmodernist "nostalgia" art language with genuine historicity becomes dramatically apparent. (*Postmodernism* 67)

Jameson suggests that the distance between the simulacra of pastiche and the objects which should function as referents prevents critical approaches to political and social concerns. Instead of referents, we are left with icons as markers for situating the nature of media language. The problem for Jameson, and for other cultural theorists, is when these markers are assumed to be the referents of such languages, or what Stuart Hall calls "natural recognitions": the reading of cultural signs as if they are divorced from ideological content.

> Iconic signs are, however, particularly vulnerable to being "read" as natural because visual codes of perception are very widely distributed and because this type of sign is less arbitrary than a linguistic sign. ("Encoding, Decoding" 96)

Hall asks how mass communication's dependence on iconicity creates a false interpretation of signs as belonging to the "real" and not as ideologically shaped or simulated. Pop Art, and collage in general, plays with these assumptions by manipulating the already ideological messages located within the codes we encounter in daily life. The iconic image of Marilyn Monroe that Hamilton, McHale, and Yoelker worked from, or the Marilyn Warhol repeated over a canvas (or several canvases), contain ideological codes separate from Marilyn Monroe the actress. How we interpret those codes depends upon our interaction with the technological culture that produces them. As Hall states:

> The level of connotation of the visual sign, of its contextual reference and positioning in different discursive fields of meaning and association, is the point where already coded signs intersect with the deep semantic codes of a culture and take on additional, more active ideological dimensions. ("Encoding, Decoding" 97)

A likewise point has since been made by Greil Marcus whose study of Elvis Presley in *Dead Elvis* details Elvis not as historical figure but rather "echoes, not facts" (*Dead Elvis* 4). For Marcus, the icon we name Elvis carries across various media forms in visual and textual references: comic book covers, filmic allusions, advertising, commodification. The end result of these references is a discursive collage in which Elvis comes to represent any number of things. His iconic status is "read," as Hall puts it, as both "natural" (Elvis the man born in Tupelo, Mississippi) and unnatural (Elvis the Joni Mabe collage *Love Letter to Elvis*). In contrast to Jameson, however, Marcus demonstrates that electronic culture's usage of collage in order to engage with entertainment need not be frivolous. Instead, these discursive collages incorporate personal, historical, and critical meanings at various levels of interaction. Elvis' shifting meanings allow for the sign we name as Elvis to be commutated in various manners, to

be put to various ideological purposes, from the Elvisburger critique of consumer fetishism to Marcus' understandings of Elvis as metaphor for American idealism.

> With each of [the examples of *Dead Elvis*] there is a presentation, an acting out, a fantasy, a performance, not of what it means to be an American – to be a creature of history, the inheritor of certain crimes, wars, ideas, landscapes – but rather a presentation, an acting out, a fantasy of what the deepest and most extreme possibilities and dangers of our national identity are. (*Dead Elvis* 31)

Cool, I contend, is the logic of these interactions.

The question of cool, therefore, is the question of referentiality. The juxtaposition of a technological methodology (McLuhan and Baudrillard) and an artistic analogy (collage) informs my project of the role referentiality plays in the digital. In particular, this juxtaposition teaches me that in the post war period, technology and artistic practice come together to form a non-referential system of discourse, one based on the notion of appropriation, as it is informed by cultural phenomenon (a point I will elaborate on in the following cultural studies discussion). Arthur Danto, for instance, examines how Pop Artists appropriate cultural signs into their artistic work in order to challenge perceptions about such iconic markers. Why does a bed hung on the wall by Robert Rauschenberg earn the title art and a regular bed doesn't? Danto asks. Does the presence of the bed in an art gallery determine what comprises "art"? "But then being a work of art must seem to have as little to do with any intrinsic features of the object so classed as with the conventions through which if first gets to be a work of art" (Danto 28). Is artistic practice dependent on likeness? "The fact that imitations are likenesses of originals, as mirror images are likenesses of originals, establishes nothing, since the latter do and the former do not logically or conceptually require originals" (Danto 69).

What follows is a breakdown of this dissertation's remaining chapters. Just as my initial juxtaposition concerns cultural studies, technology, and writing, the three chapters of the dissertation outside of the introduction will discuss these areas, but will do so through a collage guided by 1963 temporal juxtapositions. In the ensuing sections of this introduction, I briefly outline how cool is understood within each respective discipline as well as what each area offers the other. To discuss cultural studies, I begin with the questions raised by Danto regarding representation, for in 1963, referentiality means racial representation. And cultural studies sees representation as a main point of cultural critique.

### Culture Studies

Cultural studies enters my project by way of Amiri Baraka's 1963 *Blues People*. Baraka asks how the representation of African-American culture in popular music forms becomes appropriated by white production on a consistent basis. For Baraka, twentieth century African-American music finds itself appropriated by not only white performers, but by commercial interests who isolate African-American cultural artifacts from their original musical context and recontextualize them in non-historical manners. Baraka states that appropriation begins with minstrel adaptations of black face, waters down jazz stylistics through the popularity of white performers such as Paul Whiteman, and transforms the look of musicians, in particular Dizzy Gillespie, into a commodity representative of a growing 1950s white "hip" movement.

> The goatee, beret, and window-pane glasses were no accidents; they were, in the oblique significance that social history demands, as usefully symbolic as had been the Hebrew nomenclature in the spirituals. That is, they pointed toward a way of thinking, an emotional and psychological resolution of some not so obscure social need or attitude." (*Blues People* 201)

Representation and commodification overlap within Baraka's analysis and are a focal point of what he will call "cool." Baraka's critique belongs to the general concerns of cultural studies which focuses heavily on questions of racial, gender, and class representation. Traditionally in cultural studies, theoretical analysis often sets out to uncover discrepancies in representation or to position an argument within the context of how individual groups have been allowed or denied access to available means of production or discourse. Cultural studies investigates dominant discourses and the means minority discourses utilize to resist their influence, or what is labeled hegemony. In his classic study of British youth culture, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Dick Hebdige works from Stuart Hall's definition of hegemony as

> a situation in which a provisional alliance of certain social groups can exert "total social authority" over other subordinate groups, not simply by coercion or by the direct imposition of ruling ideas but by "winning and shaping consent so that the power of the dominant classes appears both legitimate and natural." (*Subculture* 15-16)

With Baraka, 1950s and 1960s African-American culture's resistance to the hegemonic discourse of white America comes by way of detachment. Drawing from the short lived 1950s musical genre cool jazz, Baraka finds an analogy to African-American experience. Cool jazz took its name as a reaction to the "hot" style of first swing and later bebop, the fast, tension driven East coast sound of musicians like Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Cool formed on the West coast after the release of Miles Davis' 1948 *Birth of the Cool* album. Quickly abandoned by Davis, the sound was picked up by white musicians like Chet Baker, Stan Getz, and Gerry Mulligan and tended to emphasize a restraint and modesty in expression as well as a lack of challenge to structural forms. This restrained and detached nature of cool jazz, opposed to the later emerging free jazz sound

of the sixties, led Baraka to comment on similar attitudes within black culture. Shut out from mainstream society at the cultural level (music and artifacts often taken over by white culture as commodities– but frequently done so in ways that seem natural to the white majority) and at the political level (denied access to the institutional order because of segregation), African-American culture created its own aesthetic called cool.

> To be cool was, in its most accessible meaning, to be calm, even unimpressed by what horror the world might daily propose. As a term used by Negroes, the horror, etc., might be simply the deadeningly predictable mind of white America. . .It is perhaps the flexibility of the Negro that has let him survive; his ability to "be cool" – to be calm unimpressed, detached, perhaps to make failure as secret a phenomenon as possible. (*Blues People* 213)

Baraka's understanding of cool as detachment explained African-American culture as a failed experience. Baraka's cool reflects James Baldwin's 1963 remark that at the center of American cultural production stood "The black people of this nation, who must now share the fate of a nation that has never accepted them" (Baldwin 103). More recently, Donnell Alexander reminds culture studies that "black cool is cool as we know it" (Alexander 46). Rather than consider how African-American notions of cool contribute to an overall cultural phenomenon, Baraka dismissed cool as the result of an oppressive practice. Out of Baraka's work, a series of publications on cool as a youthful and African-American failed cultural phenomenon have emerged.

Marcel Danesi's *Cool: The Signs and Meanings of Adolescence*, for example, attempts a sociological reading of youth culture via a somewhat semiotic reading of cool as social sign. Danesi focuses on "studying the behavioural features and manifestations of coolness in the contemporary teenager" (Danesi ix). Danesi places cool's origins in literary works like *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) and in the introduction of teenagers as a subculture after World War II. For Danesi, cool is personified by the self-centered,

confused teenager who compensates for uneasiness in the culture by constructing his/her own language and social codes. As in Baraka's work, cool becomes meaningful in the post war era. Yet black culture is conspicuously missing in Danesi's work. While the analysis concentrates on white suburban teenagers and white cultural production, Danesi's teenage cool bares no resemblance to Mailer's mythical White Negro, who at the very least recognized the increased impact of African-American culture on white America after World War II. Danesi's cool owes its make-up to a whites-only study that openly ignores African-American influence. For example, Danesi mistakenly identifies the first rock and roll hit as Bill Haley and the Comets' 1955 recording of "Rock Around the Clock" instead of the often attributed 1951 recording of "Rocket 88" by Ike Turner and greatly ignores non-white literature on 1950s restless African-American youth such as Chester Himes' *Real Cool Killers* and Warren Miller's *The Cool World.*

Cool, Danesi determines, is the result of a destructive culture created by "postmodernism." Postmodernism "sees no meaning in the world beyond the satisfaction of immediate survival urges and drives, and therefore finds any search for meaning as itself *meaningless*" (Danesi 33). Following the cultural patterns created by postmodernism, youth adapt a similar nihilistic attitude.

> No wonder, then, that coolness, in any of its versions, has become such a compelling, widespread behavioural phenomenon. Like never before, the teenager of today is projected into a confused, often violent and dangerous, subculture that all too frequently extols destructiveness. (Danesi 35)

From this limited view of postmodernism, Danesi's argument becomes largely structured around an even narrower understanding of cool as "clique membership as well as regular attendance at parties" (Danesi 42). In the end, a definition of cool as synonym of "popular" emerges, albeit popular youth who lead self-destructive lives. Just as

problematic are Danesi's large scale generalizations of youth behavior, that in exhibiting cool, males "tend to stare more" and "are more inclined to 'make faces' for comical effect" while females "are more likely to keep their facial expressions composed" (Danesi 72). What Danesi calls "codes" of cool, then, become limited, casual observations. "*Being cool* for the denizens of the contemporary social territory that I have called *teenagerhood* entails knowing how to dress for a peer audience, how to carve out an appropriate body image for that same audience, what kind of rock music is fashionable, which peers to hang out with, how to smoke, what parties to attend, how to speak in strategic ways, and so on" (Danesi 125). Youth culture constructs a great deal of cool. The simplicity of Danesi's shallow observations, however, (confusing cool with popularity) unfortunately shadows similar studies, some of which I will briefly comment on below.

Unlike Danesi's concentration on white youth, most other work on youth culture and cool has returned Baraka's understandings of failed experience to African-American culture. The idea of cool as a negative social position continues in Richard Majors and Janet Mancini Billson's *Cool Pose*. The book's subtitle, *The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America*, foreshadows an exploration of cool as detrimental force within the male, black, American community. Presented as an ethnography of black male culture, the work's stature stems from scattered quotes of black youth regarding what it means to be "cool."

> See, you don't let things bother you too much. Start letting things bother you, you're going to lose your cool. – Phil. (Mancini Billson and Majors 26).
> Material coolness is not exclusive to the black community. It's everywhere. – Charles, 27. (Mancini Billson and Majors 78)

From the quotes they gather, Mancini Billson and Majors present a study of not just what comprises cool within African-American society, but also how cool contributes to the social problems faced by black males.

> We believe that cool pose helps to explain the fact that African-American males die earlier and faster than white males from suicide, homicide, accidents, and stress-related illnesses; that black males are more deeply involved in criminal and delinquent activities; that they drop out of school and are suspended more often that white children; and that they have more volatile relationships with women. (Mancini Billson and Majors 2)

Mancini Billson and Majors ask two important questions: "How does cool pose help bring balance, stability, confidence, and a sense of masculinity to those African-Americans who adopt it, and how does cool pose work destructively in their lives?" although a greater emphasis is placed on the latter question throughout their analysis (Mancini Billson and Majors 3). In *Cool Pose*, cool translates as masculinity and survival techniques: "Coolness and manhood are so intricately intertwined that letting the cool mask fall, even briefly, feels threatening. This is the façade that provides security in an insecure world. This is the mask that provides outer calm in the midst of inner turmoil" (Mancini Billson and Majors 28). As the authors demonstrate, the role of the mask simultaneously plays supportive and destructive roles in cool. *Cool Pose* supports Franz Fanon's critique in *Black Skin, White Masks* that the mask superficially hides black identity, detaches it from cultural experience and creates a false "white" persona. *Cool Pose's* position, though, conflicts with Robert Farris Thompson's research that the origins of cool reside partly in the African ritual mask. For Farris Thompson, masks and facial depictions demonstrate cool in a positive, life enhancing manner that yields to difficult circumstances rather than opposes them.

> Coolness, then, is a part of character, and character objectifies proper custom. To the degree that we live generously and discreetly, exhibiting grace under pressure, our appearance and our acts gradually assume virtual royal power. (*Flash of the Spirit* 16)

In "Coolness in Everyday Life," sociologists Stanford Lyman and Marvin Scott present the cool mask as that which individuals wear in confronting risks. Like Mancini Billson and Majors' version of cool, Lyman and Scott herald cool as an emotional protective device for the trials of daily existence.

> A failure to maintain expressive control, a giving away to emotionalism, flooding out, paleness, sweatiness, weeping, or violent expressions of anger or fear are definite signs of loss of cool. (Lyman and Scott 149)

And like Mancini Billson and Majors, Lyman and Scott point to black culture (what they deem as the "low social order") for cool as survival mechanism.

> It is among quite ordinary American Negroes and persons similarly situated that we find the creative imagination developed toward posturing and prevarication and characterlogical coolness. (Lyman and Scott 155)

While the question of masking identity does play a role in displaying cool, overall, Mancini Billson and Majors' research of cool often appears one-dimensional. Like Danesi's work, its observations of black culture tend to fall into generalizations, albeit ones regarding black, instead of white, culture. Their simplification of black cultural experience labels cool as something to be avoided or overcome. While Mancini Billson and Majors focus on cool as life style (clothes, cars, hustling, language, dancing), their analysis of these elements deems cool as warning sign, almost a call to eliminate African-American youth culture as it now exists. Rather than look to popular culture manifestations of cool (literature, music, film) as a mode of expression, they instead rely on broad observations based on conversations with African-American youth to depict cool as little more than social rebellion. Claims like "From an early age, black teens see

cars as a status symbol" (Mancini Billson and Majors 82) or "Being called 'lame to the bone' or 'uncool' is the ultimate insult in black teenage vernacular" (Mancini Billson and Majors 83) do little to explain the overall effects of cool as expression.

These authors believe that at some level cool grants racial and class difference an opportunity to partake in a dominant system, which is often white and in control of institutional power. "Playing it cool protects one's chance of survival and enhances self-esteem. Cool pose can be used as a form of protection against white authorities. The Man – police and other symbols of white authority – can be thrown off balance by a carefully staged cool performance" (Mancini Billson and Majors 39). While cool allows for defense strategies, it still poses a problem; cool holds back black culture. "The consequences [of cool pose] will continue to plague our society and the black community unless we begin to consider other ways of viewing this phenomenon" (Mancini Billson and Majors 109). The authors' alternative to cool pose is to remove it; to develop community programs for African-American youth and a general establishment of manhood training programs as a replacement for cool pose.

Their call echoes Marlene Kim Connor's conclusion that cool "no longer serves us well" (Connor 2) because it shoulders responsibility for society's ills and continued problems of juvenile delinquency. Asking "What is Cool?" (the title of her work) Connor also responds that it is a survival ethic, one arising from "a desperate need for guidelines concerning maturity that incorporated the strange challenges of street life, of life without the tools for traditional American manhood, and of a life where life itself is the only thing you possess that's of any value" (Connor 20). When that need turns violent, cool, Connor states, becomes cold. Street culture takes over any sensibility. Connor's argument

resembles John Horton's 1963 study of African-American street culture, "Time and Cool People." Horton reduced African-American cool to questions of language, different time schemata (the racist CPT marker – Colored People's Time), and style.

> Style may also refer to the use of gestures in conversation or in dance. It may be expressed in the loose walk, the jivey or dancing walk, the slow cool walk, the way one "chops" or "makes it" down the street. It may be the loose, relaxed hand rap or hand slap, the swinger's greeting, which is used also in the hip middle class teen sets. (Horton 11).

Like Horton, Connor's evidence of what comprises cool stems from casual observations of black culture (teenagers getting high and falling prey to consumerism), as well as the persistent belief that cool is a measurement of manhood that eventually settles on the question "Who is Cool?" Connor's celebrity listings (including Stokely Carmichael, Andrew Young, and Malcolm X) reduce cool to mere behavior, the composure these figures demonstrate in public life. Indeed, Who is Cool is the focal point of Douglas MacAdams' *Birth of the Cool: Beat, Bebop, and the American Avant-Garde*, a series of brief, biographical sketches of celebrities the author deems cool: Miles Davis, Jack Kerouac, John Cage, and Bob Dylan. The difference between What is Cool and Who is Cool becomes lost in a majority of contemporary, cultural work on cool. Making cool an issue of personality traits, of posturing, of an "angry, daring, impulsive" display ignores the larger aesthetic contributions of cool to discourse (Connor 19). What culture does with these traits proves a more interesting question than who exemplifies them.

From Mancini Billson and Majors and Connor's work, then, larger questions are raised. How does the rhetoric of African-American youth culture provide not just a means for black male survival within a white dominated society, but a discourse from which the culture as a whole draws upon, what Gena Dagel Caponi calls "a new vision of

African-American culture, one that stresses relation and interaction, and one that prompts us to ask new questions about the underlying structures of human behavior and cultural expression" (Caponi 31)? Does the discourse of African-American culture carry over into other areas of expression?

In response to texts like *Cool Pose* and *What is Cool?*, Dick Pountain and David Robbins' *Cool Rules* promises such an examination by labeling cool "a cultural category" with far reaching effects. Their work purposes to be

> quite eclectic, exploring fields, from social psychology to cultural anthropology, in which we can claim no special expertise. As well as examining fragments of history, to compare the ways in which Cool has appeared among different generations, we have drawn on sociology and social psychology to explore the group-dynamic dimensions of Cool, psychology and psychoanalysis to examine the Cool personality and its relation to others, and literary analysis to see how Cool works in film and the written word. (Pountain and Robbins 8)

Pountain and Robbins' project attempts a synthesis of media manifestations of cool at various levels within American and English cultural traditions.

> We will try to establish three chief arguments about [the] combination of personality traits we call Cool: that it has sufficient coherence to be recognizable as 'syndrome' that is transmissible via culture and that has a traceable history (although we will do no more than sketch that history); that it is at odds with both European and American Puritan traditions; and that it has until recently appeared in those societies as a form of social deviance and rebellion, but that it is now losing this rebellious status and becoming the dominant ethic of late consumer capitalism. We will argue that Cool has mutated from a religious ethic that served to curb the aggression of young men in warrior societies, to a defense mechanisms against the degradation of slavery, a form of rebellion against he conformity of industrial capitalism, and, more recently, a mechanism for coping with the competitive pressure of post-industrial consumer capitalism. (Pountain and Robbins 28)

The analysis, though, becomes so inclusive, the end result includes every cultural personality or event as somehow "cool." Like the special edition of the journal *New*

*Formations* entitled *Cool Moves*,[14] which included an excerpt from the book, this version of cool is borderless; anything and everything has become cool in the global society: homosexual culture, smoking, and even Avon market strategies in Latin America. "We can recognize [cool] when we see it" (Pountain and Robbins 18), the authors declare, but readers must assume that the entire world has been placed on display. Pountain and Robbins trace cool in a very brief a-historical manner from World War I to the present day to account for known social phenomenon (1920s avant-garde, the hippies), popular personalities (the images of James Dean and Marlon Brando), films (in particular those of Robert Mitchum), and gender (Billie Holiday, but also the odd mention of Hillary Rodham Clinton). Eventually, these forms of cool and how cultures respond to them are best explained by psychology: "What cool has offered to groups as disparate as field slaves, jazz musicians, disillusioned war veterans, Detroit street gangs, teenage runaways and middle class high school dissenters is a kind of mental empowerment that their circumstances otherwise fail to supply. In this sense Cool is a subcultural alternative to the old notion of personal dignity" (153).

Again, cool creates a place of empowerment, what Mancini Billson and Majors describe as the task of cool pose.

> Cool pose is a carefully crafted persona based on power and control over what the black male says and does – how he "plays" his role. For the black male who has limited control of access to conventional power or resources, cool pose is empowering. (Mancini Billson and Majors 28)

But raising cool to the level of personal dignity leaves it as an individual reaction and merely repeats the project of Who is Cool? We can construct endless indexes of popular cultural figures as representative of cool, but the exercise eliminates the application of

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[14] *New Formations* 39

cool as rhetorical method. A rhetoric of cool assumes that cool goes beyond the individual as it provides a way of constructing discourse. The role of the celebrity remains relevant to cool, but it is not the only contributor. The task remains for a rhetorical practice to address cool's role in approaches outside of personality empowerment. How, for example, do these preceding accounts of cool function when juxtaposed with Marshall McLuhan's definition? Does the cultural engagement of cool concern new media and technology in general? My argument is that cool incorporates issues relevant to specific African-American culture production into an electronic realm, producing new ways of communication, or as Donnell Alexander states, "The real secret weapon of cool is that it's about synthesis" (Alexander 52). We can understand the ways cultural studies designates cool through both its representations in media and its contributions to media forms, the ways cool synthesizes across disciplinary formations. One area of media production that explains cultural influence is literature. In Chapter Two, I will examine the ways 1950s and 1960s literature informs cultural studies, specifically how genres produced during these time periods, like Beat writings and noir, produce new concerns regarding the relationship between cool and cultural study.

## Technology

What these texts I've described work around, therefore, is the concept of cool as restricted to social interaction at the level of white youth, black masculinity, or even communal relations in general. Missing from the analysis is how these social reactions become transformed into discourse, and specifically discourse shaped by technology. Between 1962 and 1964, Marshall McLuhan expressed interest in the relationship between social change and new media. As he wrote in a later work: "All media work us

over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched" (*Medium is the Massage* 26). Theorizing the ways media affect culture, in the time period leading up to and including 1963, McLuhan dichotomized media forms into hot and cool.

> There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in "high definition." High definition is the state of being well filled with data. A photograph is, visually, "high definition." A cartoon is "low definition," simply because very little visual information is provided. Telephone is a cool medium, or one of low definition, because the ear is given a meager amount of information. And speech is a cool medium of low definition, because so little is given and so much has to be filled in by the listener. On the other hand, hot media do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience. Hot media are, therefore, low in participation, and cool media are high in participation. (*Understanding Media* 36)

In contrast to Baraka's understandings of cool as a "non-participatory" social reaction, McLuhan found cool media forms to require high participation by viewers and readers. McLuhan's definition of cool derives from a grammatological perspective. The electronic age, McLuhan stated, has transformed literary practices into media formations. The task is to study the ways technology (within media perspectives) shapes notions of literacy. Beginning with print, literacy creates a sense of individual detachment from the surrounding social structure due to the mechanized nature of the printing press.

> Perhaps the most significant of the gifts of typography to man is that of detachment and noninvolvement .. It was precisely the power to separate thought and feeling, to be able to act without reacting that split literate man out of the global world of close family bonds in private and social life. (*Understanding Media* 157-8)

Detachment led to scholastic practices that defined literacy as expertise in separate disciplines (inherited from the traditional divisions of the trivium and

quadrivium where areas of study, like logic or rhetoric, must be considered independent). New media, on the other hand, supports an interlinking mosaic of various disciplines influencing one another. The challenge, McLuhan taught, is to integrate new media into contemporary curriculums to better reflect technology's role in pedagogy. For while students are raised in a mosaic culture,

> At school, however, [they encounter] a situation organized by means of classified information. The subjects are unrelated. They are visually conceived in terms of a blueprint. The student can find no possible means of involvement for himself, nor can he discover how the educational scene relates to the "mythic" world of electronically processed data and experience he takes for granted. (*Understanding Media* viii – ix)

McLuhan asks for a correlation between pedagogy and media, to repeat the mosaic nature of cool media in modern scholastics. The shift is from detachment to involvement. Whereas Baraka defined cool as a non-participatory, detached social experience, McLuhan saw cool as a high-participatory media experience influencing social behavior. Whether McLuhan realized it or not, however, the alienated, cool experience of African-American culture in the '50s and '60s leads to the cool world imagined by McLuhan and defined as the "global village." The global village, the product of media implosion, has been widely understood as a peaceful setting, but for McLuhan the global village fosters a tense environment in which an alienated populace is crowded together. Tension arises out of diversity, interaction, conflicting interests and goals, and forced participation. "The tribal-global village is far more divisive – full of fighting – than any nationalism ever was. Village is fission, not fusion, in depth. People leave small towns to avoid involvement" ("A Dialogue" 280). The potential for creativity and alternative production strategies in this environment, however, is great. The role of 1963 African-American culture within this framework will be spelled out more clearly in

Chapter Three's discussion of how rhetorical strategies of the inner city become shaped by technology in film and music.

This tension also leads to emotional changes as well. Cool media create cool emotions. As Peter Stearns writes in *American Cool*, Victorian sentiment situated within twentieth century technology shifts to the feeling we call cool. In a larger context, the stoicism of ancient Greece has been revived; the stoic reaction to conflict, apathy and disinterest, has become a contemporary survival technique in a media-driven culture, what Gerald Sykes called "The Cool Millennium." "Man rushes first to be saved by technology, and then to be saved from it," Sykes wrote in the opening pages of his text by the same name, a warning of the emotional after effects of the technology age (1). For McLuhan, technology extends all senses and physical attributes; the car replaces the foot, the light bulb substitutes for the eye. As the result of a numbing down of the way people think and respond, new technology overrides sensation with a cool feeling.

> An extension appears to be an amplification of an organ, a sense or a function, that inspires the central nervous system to a self protective gesture of numbing of the extended area, at least so far as direct inspection and awareness are concerned. (*Understanding Media* 157)

A feeling of being numb, cool allows for the sullen look popularized by the protagonists of '50s films, the sunglasses wearing outsiders (like Brando's Johnny in *The Wild One*) McLuhan described as detached figures inviting participation. "Dark glasses, on the other hand, create the inscrutable and inaccessible image that invites a great deal of participation and completion" (*Understanding Media* 44). George Clinton's Parliament make a similar contemporary statement in the song "P.Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up)": "Let me put my sunglasses on. That's the law around here, you got to wear your sunglasses. So you can feel cool." Cool as image becomes a detached emotional

experience whether in art, literature, or music. The paradox of cool lays in both the detached and involved social experience. One removes oneself from the surrounding culture, yet invites high participation through the media formations one is exposed to. The global village we currently label electronic culture, Internet culture, or digital culture is marked by both alienation and high involvement. McLuhan's observation, like Warhol's, highlights the detached experience created by the age of mechanical reproduction. Nevertheless, that same experience allows unbridled access to reproducible images and information; it forces new involvement in mass production.

> Now that the assembly line recedes before the new patterns of information, synchronized by electric tape, the miracles of mass-production assume entire intelligibility. But the novelties of automation, creating workless and propertyless communities, envelop us in new uncertainties. (*The Gutenberg Galaxy* 326)

Cool results from a highly, automated culture. Automation, as Walter Benjamin stressed in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" creates repeatability. Benjamin found that repeatability endangers the "aura" of the original work subjected to reproduction; it challenges the sense of presence innate to the original. The age of mechanical reproduction blurs the boundaries between copy and original, commutating one for the other, exchanging the bases from which referents are imagined. For McLuhan, this repeatability belongs to grammatology. "Repeatability is the core of the mechanical principle that has dominated our world, especially since the Gutenberg technology" (*Understanding Media* 147). Repeatability indicates another moment of cool discourse; it specifies the place where automation translates as expression. Repeatability emerges in 1963 in Warhol's *Double Elvis* (two Elvises as opposed to one) or Marvel Comics' decision of the same year to place an iconic representation of the

company name on the cover of each magazine. Like Warhol's series of soup cans or iconic portraits, Marvel's superhero comics functioned by way of the numbered series, the repetitive presence of Spiderman or The Fantastic Four in issue after issue, with increasing alterations, sometimes slight, sometimes significant. Repeatability guides the non-narrative films made by William Burroughs and Antony Balch in 1963, *Towers Open Fire* and *Bill & Tony*, where images and sound tracks are repeated in various forms in order to challenge the ways cultural reception takes for granted media representations. For Burroughs, repeatability becomes a defense mechanism, a virus injected into oppressive discursive practices.

> What does virus do wherever it can dissolve a hole and find traction? – It starts eating – And what does it do with what it eats? – It makes exact copies of itself that start eating to make more copies that start eating and so forth to the virus power the fear hate virus slowly replaces the host with virus copies. (*Nova Express* 73)

And repeatability lies at the center of Dwight McDonald's critique of media culture in his 1962 collection *Against the American Grain*. McDonald finds that technology's capability of fast and cheap reproduction creates an entertainment culture devoid of any sensibility or individual choice (the very thing, for example, McLuhan, Warhol and Burroughs approach by engaging with repetition). "The technology of producing mass 'entertainment' (again the quotes are advised) imposes a simplistic, repetitious pattern so that it is easier to say the public wants this than to say the truth which is that the public gets this and so wants it" (10-11).

Repeatability dominates the two texts McLuhan wrote from 1962-1964. *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and *Understanding Media* imitate the end result of a repetitive, highly participatory culture. As McLuhan introduced *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, "The galaxy of

constellation of events upon which the present study concentrates is itself a mosaic of perpetually interacting forms that have undergone kaleidoscope transformation" (*The Gutenberg Galaxy* 8). McLuhan's text forms a mosaic; traditional, literate, notions of authorship and scholarship give way to a collage of citations, allusions, and cut and pasted fragments in which ideas and statements return throughout the texts. Its form attempts to explain why "print confers on man a language of thought which leaves him unready to face the language of his own electro-magnetic technology" (*The Gutenberg Galaxy* 42). The new electronic language, McLuhan teaches, removes citations from their aura (their original place of publication) and recontextualizes them. Like *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, *Understanding Media* can be read as a print version of the mechanized cool discourse developing in the early '60s. Compiled by fragmented sections, the text is an assemblage of discussions of various technological and media formations: print, the car, radio, the phonograph, the typewriter, television. The chapters lead from one to another by association and can be read out of order. *Understanding Media* teaches an electronic reading and writing practice as nonlinear, reproducible, and associative, one governed by principles of juxtaposition. What McLuhan didn't envision was how the computer would transform this vision into an electronic, cool discourse.

## McLuhan's Cool Media as Computer Text

Douglas Engelbart's 1963 work with computers, though, did visualize McLuhan's interests in juxtaposition. Like McLuhan, Engelbart felt new technology leads to new methods of thinking and writing and, therefore, new demands print cannot meet. Engelbart's 1963 essay, "A Conceptual Framework for Augmenting Man's Intellect," proposed the computer as a new writing machine, one more suitable to electronic culture

than print. What McLuhan was trying to create in the old medium (the book), Engelbart

was hypothesizing in a new medium (the computer). Engelbart suggested that computers

be used for storing writing as well as for representing several versions of text at once for

further manipulation (Engelbart 7). What Engelbart theorized in 1963, we recognize

today as the windows system popular on all personal computers regardless of operating

system.

> This hypothetical writing machine thus permits you to use a new process of
> composing text. For instance, trial drafts can rapidly be composed from
> rearranged excerpts of old drafts, together with new words or passages
> which you insert by hand typing. Your first draft may represent a free
> outpouring of thoughts in any order, with the inspection of foregoing
> thoughts continuously stimulating new considerations and ideas to be
> entered. (Engelbart 7)

Just as McLuhan offered cut and pasted excerpts as the model for electronic

discourse, Engelbart envisioned the computer as a cut and paste machine. Engelbart's

system allowed for writing to be converted into symbolic representations that the

computer displays on a screen. The result is a system of symbolic recognition organized

around the principle of commutation, any symbol can easily be exchanged for another.

Engelbart's system built off of previous work regarding computers such as the essays

collected in Edward Feigenbaum and Julian Feldman 1963 *Computers and Thought*.

Feigenbaum and Feldman explained the computer as "a general symbol-processing

devise, capable of performing any well-defined process for the manipulation and

transformation of information" (1).

Under the rules of Engelbart's system, writing translates as iconic representation.

The letters on a screen are, in fact, icons created out of exchangeable patterns of

computer interpreted ones and zeros. In other words, the computer delivers a cool form of

writing, one with the potential for increased participation by writers and readers working with various texts at once. Engelbart considered the possibilities of his theory as pedagogical.

> What changes in language and methodology might not result? If it were so easy to look things up, how would our vocabulary develop, how would our habits of exploring the intellectual domains of others shift, how might the sophistication of practical organization mature (if each person could so quickly and easily look up applicable rules), how would our education system change to take advantage of this new external symbol-manipulation capability of students and teachers and administrators? (Engelbart 15)

While Engelbart worked out the specifics of his computer writing machine, fellow computer guru Ted Nelson sketched an alternative version of computerized writing, one which he named hypertext. Although Nelson didn't publish the term hypertext until 1965, he claims he invented the word in 1963.[15] Nelson's vision of hypertext extended beyond the stand alone system proposed by Engelbart. Under Nelson's description, hypertext would incorporate many computers at once, all interlinked, to share information. Nelson hypothesized a system where pages would be juxtaposed in front of the user creating a display more analogous to associative thought. Today, of course, we recognize Nelson's concept on stand alone hypertext programs like Storyspace or on the more popular World Wide Web. Eventually, Nelson's hypertext earned the name Xanadu and was detailed in *Computer Lib/Dream Machines*, two books bound as one, which attempted to mimic hypertext with overlapping, non-linear sections.

From McLuhan to Engelbart to Nelson, 1963 offers a technological position regarding writing. Within McLuhan's framework emerges an imploding digital culture, mosaic in style, and highly mechanized. Under contemporary terms, McLuhan's galaxy

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[15] See Nelson's website: http://www.sfc.keio.ac.jp/~ted/TN/WhoIAm.html.

materializes as the cyber. Framed by science fiction, performance art, linguistics, the body, music, consumerism, celebrities, and literature, cyberculture demonstrates the McLuhan "global village," tense and mosaic, interactive and reproducible. The cyber embraces the computerized systems drawn up by Engelbart and Nelson with far reaching effects. The information dominated electronic culture described by McLuhan (and later Baudrillard) in 1963 has shifted to this new stage of cyberculture where information is also informed by entertainment.

## Cyberculture

This version of cyberculture is best understood by cultural theorist Mark Dery. Working from McLuhan's ideas, Dery presents a cool cyberculture shaped by the intertextuality of the various areas of cultural discourse and their relationship to the digital. In particular, Mark Dery's *Escape Velocity* outlines the impulse of cyberculture to use cool as a means of expression – one informed by the demands of cultural studies and aesthetics. *Escape Velocity* resembles Dery's attempts in the latter *The Pyrotechnic Insanitarium* to create a "Gutenbergian artifact that rewards nonlinear reading and welcomes readers at ease with mental hyper-links – far flung, associative leaps of logic. It's tuned to the keynote assumption of our age of Nets and Webs and massively parallel Connection Machines – namely, that information exists not in discrete atoms of act but in synergistic meshworks and unexpected juxtapositions" (*The Pyrotechnic Insanitarium* 44). Dery's work becomes an update of McLuhan and Engelbart, a discussion on interacting disciplines in a computer driven culture. *Escape Velocity* follows McLuhan's remark that "in the age of instant information man ends his job of fragmented specializing and assumes the role of information-gathering" (*Understanding Media* 130)

and Baudrillard's interest in how information exchange has replaced traditional notions of production.

> The engines of industrial production have given way to an information economy that produces intangible commodities – Hollywood blockbusters, TV programs, high-tech theme parks, one-minute megatrends, financial transactions that flicker through fiber-optic bundles to computer terminals a world away. (*Escape Velocity* 3)

Dery's method is based on the collagist techniques of appropriation at play in digital discourse. How does one write in the digital? Models come from the artifacts of popular culture as outlined in science fiction writer William Gibson's work:

> Wittingly or not, all of [Cyberculture] constitutes living proof of William Gibson's cyberpunk maxim, 'THE STREET FINDS ITS OWN USES FOR THINGS' – a leitmotif that reappears throughout this book. Whether literal or metaphorical, their reclamation of technology and the complex, contradictory meanings that swirl around it shifts the focus of public discourse about technology from the corridors of power to Gibson's figurative street; from the technopundits, computer industry executives and Senate subcommittee members who typically dominate that discourse the disparate voices on the fringes of consumer culture. (*Escape Velocity* 15)

The cyberage repeats Walter Benjamin's project as put forth in the *Arcades*: the task of the writer is to become a collector. Benjamin's *flaneur*, who served as the basis for a cultural criticism based on collecting artifacts of consumer culture and recontextualizing them in new ways, becomes today's cyberpunk whose base of operations is within consumer culture as well. Writing about turn of the century Paris, Benjamin stated, "The collector was the true inhabitant of the interior" (*Charles Baudelaire* 168). The collector as writer fashions a new understanding of cultural history, one centered around the commutation and appropriation objects, especially consumer products. Benjamin describes his process as follows:

> These images are ideals, and in them the collective seeks not only to transfigure, but also to transcend, the immaturity of the social product and

deficiencies of the social order of production. In these ideas there also emerges a vigorous aspiration to break with what is out-dated – which means, however, with the most recent past. These tendencies turn the fantasy, which gains its initial stimulus from the new, back upon the primal past. In the dream in which every epoch sees in images the epoch which is to succeed it, the latter appears coupled with elements of prehistory – that is to say of a classless society. (*Charles Baudelaire* 159)

Science fiction writer Philip K Dick updates Benjamin's collector in the 1962 *The Man in the High Castle*. In the novel, the results of The United States losing World War II turn collecting into the ultimate pastime of the country's Japanese occupiers.

To many wealthy, cultured Japanese, the historic objects of American popular civilization were of equal interest alongside the more formal antiques. Why this was so, the major himself did not know; he was particularly addicted to the collecting of old magazines dealing with U.S. brass buttons, as well as the buttons themselves. It was on the order of coin or stamp collecting; no rational explanation could ever be given. (Dick 21)

In place of Dick's hypothesized occupiers, modern day *flaneurs* roaming the digital superhighways appear as hackers for their (in Dery's words) "'misuse' of scientific concepts and digital technology in the service of the spiritual, the intuitive, and the irrational" (*Escape Velocity* 59) and as musicians like DJ Spooky (a.k.a. Paul Miller) or DJ Shadow who roam the shelves of popular culture gathering odds and ends for new purposes. The new flaneur is probably best characterized as the digital sampler, a compiler of cultural artifacts. In Chapter Three, I will discuss this at greater length, but for now, I see that the cyber writer also becomes a collector. Accumulating material from literature, art, and science, cyber writers are cool writers constructing a mix of popular culture and technology. But the cyber is also informed by the discipline of cultural studies. Only, instead of adapting the traditional cultural studies argument regarding the digital (cyberculture reinforces hegemonic relations existing in real life), Dery's version of the cyber is based on the Gibson directive. What we collect teaches. Dery offers me a

place where McLuhan and Baraka's definitions of cool merge. For in Dery's work, cyberculture learns from cultural phenomenon; in particular, it learns from specific productions of African-American culture (music and literature) recontextualized in the electronic sphere, what Dery labels "Afrofuturism." Afrofuturism is

> speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of twentieth century technoculture - and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future. ("Black to the Future" 736)

For Dery, race and technology learn from one another, creating a place of visual expression where the collagist assumptions of juxtaposition take over, where theme parks, tattoos, art, literature, sexuality, all implode (in a McLuhan sense) to provide a new, challenging mode of expression. Instead of viewing, for instance, appropriation as harmful to African-American culture (Baraka's point), appropriation becomes a discursive move influenced by African-American production. Most notable in digital sampling, appropriation plays a vital role in cool. For Dery, cyberculture gives us the place to begin to think of the developing rhetorical strategies which are not separate from African-American culture but rather contribute to a rhetoric of cool. Writing, we quickly learn, as a cool practice, owes a great deal to African-American culture. In Chapter Three, I will describe the technological contribution of cool within two areas of media: film and hip hop. The choices for these two areas derive from the ways technology and cultural study intersect, and in particular, from the ways African-American culture and technology jointly shape media expression.

**Writing**

In the time period surrounding 1963, while doing field work in West Africa, Robert Farris Thompson discovered that the idea of cool (as understood in the West) derives from indigenous African cultures like the Yoruba. Farris Thompson felt that the designs and carvings in African art embodied a community ideal called cool (*itutu* in Yoruban). To be cool in Yoruban culture, one pacifies, remains firm, expresses ideal action of character, shows conciliation, and offers sacrifice. Together, these traits form an aesthetic.

> Further manifestations of aesthetic coolness in Yoruban art include representations of idealized action. We must take care not to stress character and coolness as separate semantic structures because they shade into each other. (*Flash of the Spirit* 12-13)

Without an alphabetic writing system, Farris Thompson writes, Yoruban culture articulated cool as a visual aesthetic in sculpture and dance.

> The equilibrium and poetic structure of traditional dances of the Yoruba in western Nigeria, as well as the frozen facial expressions worn by those who perform these dances, express a philosophy of the cool, an ancient, indigenous ideal: patience, and collectedness of mind. ("An Aesthetic of the Cool" 73)

Farris Thompson connects African aesthetics to American vernacular expression by way of cool. Participants of cool behavior are repeating Yoruban cultural traits; the stoic, detached glance of cool parallels the spirit of *itutu*. But as a writing form, cool also maintains a link to Yoruban culture because Yoruban discourse is a visual mode of communication based on iconic and emblematic representation. Moreover, cool representations are based on religious iconicity. "The coming of the icons of the Yoruba

to the black New World accompanied an affirmation of philosophical continuities" we currently understand as cool (*Flash of the Spirit* 93). In America, these icons became the basis for African-American art practices revolving around the fetish, a tradition encapsulated in the early '60s artwork of James Hampton and Henry Dorsey that refashioned religious objects (and objects of everyday life) into collagist outdoor art exhibits. In electronic culture, the fetish shifts to popular music and entertainment as understood within the guise of the celebrity. The religious icon converts into the popular culture icon.

We might, then, think of how specific popular culture figures, like Elvis, construct cool discursive practices. Elvis' position as a focal point in discourse has been emphasized by Andy Warhol whose 1963 *Double Elvis* foregrounds the observations later made by Greil Marcus and Gilbert Rodman that celebrity images take on roles beyond that of real life figures; they eventually translate as repetitive discourse. When writing about Elvis, for example, Marcus and Rodman show that one must always engage in the multitude of collagist references to the King defined by television, advertising, literature, politics, comics, etc. Elvis, the quintessential place where entertainment is defined by African-American culture,[16] produces the aesthetic of cool not because of his productive, musical output, but because of the culture's cooling of his image. The image of Elvis forces a new mode of interaction in communication. How do we react to popular culture in the digital age, Marcus asks. We echo him; we repeat his image in a variety of ways. Or as Peter Nazareth states, we "twin" pop culture icons like Elvis to make sense of our own lives. Their repetition provides a means of expression conducive to the

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[16] Sam Phillips, Elvis' first record producer at Sun Studios, found in Elvis the "white voice in a black body" that he felt would make him a million dollars.

repetitive strategies created in electronic culture (computer binary systems, digital sampling, etc).

Twinning, Nazareth's term taken from Elvis' dead twin brother Jesse Garon who died at birth, turns writing into repetition (like Baudrillard's cool or the web site Everything2.com whose users "cool" words across hyperlinks). Nazareth's twinning stems from an initial observation he makes regarding his repeated desire to pair recordings of the same song made by both Elvis and other artists. It also arrives, he states, from Yoruban folk practice which has created a ritual surrounding the birth and death of twins.

> The Yoruba people believe that each person has a spirit double in heaven. When twins are born, the double has come down to earth. If a twin dies, a statue must be made of him/her and treated like the twin that is alive because there is a connection between the twins. (Nazareth 48)

The juxtaposition of Nazareth's connection of Yoruban religious practices with Elvis and Farris Thompson's 1963 observations of the Yoruba and cool is the place where cool writing begins. The collagist principle of twinning within the framework of entertainment culture informs my investigation of cool as rhetoric. In Chapter Four, I will examine how this understanding of cool as writing; that is, electronic writing as collage (doubling, twinning, pattern making), plays out in composition studies. In particular, I will incorporate the concerns of composition in 1963 with more contemporary challenges to composition pedagogy. How does composition learn from and react to cultural studies and technology in the digital age in light of the dominance of aesthetics? How can we teach writing without considering the prior two positions of cultural studies and technology? Current work on digital writing has begun to examine the ways popular forms of discourse (often in the guise of entertainment) play an important role in

pedagogy, shaping both its content and form. Chapter Four will ask how we can rethink composition in the classroom within the context of writing for the World Wide Web. By doing so, we integrate cultural studies and technology in new, challenging ways. With this in mind, I will look at how cool grants us a rhetoric for the Web exemplified in hypertext, and I will offer the juxtapositions of this dissertation as a model for such an electronic writing practice. My challenge, then, is to break down the construction and operation of such a rhetoric. Over the next three chapters, I will attempt to do so by describing how the juxtaposition of cool in 1963 plays out over the areas of cultural studies (as seen in contemporary American literature), technology (represented in film and hip hop) and composition. By viewing these three areas in coordination with one another and not as distinct, separately functioning disciplines, I hope to demonstrate a rhetoric of cool.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE

All times and places exist under electric conditions. . .We call it nostalgic – "Bob's Church of the Subgenius" – from Nile Southern's *The Anarchivists of Eco-Dub*

"I don't want to get so cooled off I can't warm up no more" -Chester Himes' Grave Digger in *The Heat's On*

To be cool is to be equipped – Norman Mailer "The White Negro"

As eclectic writing makes its footprint into the electrosphere, we no longer ask "What is Literature?" but more importantly, "What is Literature's exit strategy?" – Alt-X Press statement from "About the Alt-X Virtual Imprint"

Cultural studies has long been concerned with questions of power and ideology. Based on Raymond Williams' analysis of the history of culture in his influential 1958 *Culture and Society,* the 1964 founding of the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham, England introduced the study of, as Williams stated, "a whole way of life" (*Culture and Society* xviii). As part of its interest in contemporary culture and pedagogy, the Birmingham School legitimized the study of popular culture as a means to uncovering dominant ideologies and power structures within institutional systems. In particular, the center proposed restructuring scholasticism so that the study of texts would allow for the questioning of social and political practices. The Birmingham school advised that curriculums supplement their agendas with the study of

> the question of class; complex relationships between power, which is an easier term to establish in the discourses of culture than exploitation, and exploitation; the question of a general theory which could, in a critical way, connect together in a critical reflection different domains of life, politics, and theory, theory and practice, economic, political ideological questions, and so on; the notion of critical knowledge itself and the

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production of critical knowledge as a practice. ("Theoretical Legacies" 279)

For the Birmingham School, media production attracted considerable focus. In this regard, Raymond Williams' 1962 *Communications* provided additional rationale for the Birmingham School's project. Williams suggested that the analysis of mass media include "the institutions and forms in which ideas, information, and attitudes are transmitted and received" (*Communications* 17). In response, Birmingham founders Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel's 1964 *The Popular Arts* undertook the task of asking how media and culture could be taught in relationship to the economic and political environments that help shape their existence.

> There is, in fact, a growing recognition that the media of mass communication play such a significant role in society, and especially in the lives of young people, that the school must embrace the study of their organization, content and impact. But there is little agreement about how such studies should be carried out. Just what shall be studies? With what precise purpose? In what relationship to established subjects? Ultimately the answer will depend upon our attitude towards these media, our social thinking about the kind of society in which they wield their influence and, in particular, our response to the things the media offer – individual films, television programmes, popular songs, etc. (Hall and Whannel 21)

Since its inception, cultural studies has answered Hall and Whannel's initial questions by examining the ways classroom pedagogy situates itself in relationship to political practice, often doing so through the study of media. To study cultural texts is one thing, cultural studies states. To act upon political awareness as a result of such study means something entirely different. As Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Triechler state in their anthology of cultural studies, "Cultural studies thus believes that its practice does matter, that its own intellectual works is supposed to – can – make a difference" (6).

In another edited collection of cultural studies essays, Simon During puts the point across similarly.

> Cultural studies has been, as we might expect, most interested in how groups with least power practically develop their own readings of, and uses for, cultural products – in fun, in resistance, or to articulate their own identity. (7)

In composition studies, cultural studies has played an increasingly influential, if not controversial, role. While I will discuss the role of composition in cool at greater length in Chapter Four, it is important to note how cultural study and composition discuss representation, ideology, and power and debate these relationships in regards to the teaching of writing.[1] Notably, composition looks to cultural study as a way to relieve what Lynn Worsham calls "the field's designation as a service component of the university and for gaining passage out of (at an ideological level) the predominantly service-oriented postindustrial economy of contemporary society and into a different economy of intellectual work" (Worsham 3). As part of the attempt to remove the service component from composition in favor of a social activist-theoretical role, James Berlin's position that all rhetorical study must address the presence of ideology in discourse has inspired a great deal of current cultural study influenced pedagogy. Berlin's work demonstrates the ways cultural study can be integrated into the classroom through its proposition that composition study the semiotic cultural codes that make up popular

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[1] The debate regarding how composition integrates cultural study into its curriculum is complex. While there are strong objections to teaching cultural studies in the composition classroom, I will focus primarily on those writers who recognize its importance, even if they find current approaches problematic.

discourse in order to teach students how these codes construct subjectivity. Berlin's pedagogy sought

> To make students aware of the cultural codes – the various competing discourses – that attempt to influence who they are. Our larger purpose is to encourage our students to resist and to negotiate these codes – these hegemonic discourses – in order to bring about more personally humane and socially equitable economic and political arrangements. ("Composition and Cultural Studies" 50)

Elsewhere, Berlin situates the argument more explicitly in terms of writing by integrating the study of rhetoric with the implicit ideologies already existing in rhetorical strategies. "A rhetoric can never be innocent, can never be a disinterested arbiter of the ideological claims of others because it is always already serving certain ideological claims" ("Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class" 477). The way to circumvent dominant ideological claims, Berlin contends, is to demonstrate the inherent contradictions within them. Advertising, music, film, comic books, all become acceptable media for study because they reveal how racial, gendered, and class groups are represented by the dominant discourse as well as how they are not represented. The study of these media can reveal oppressive institutional practices. Doing so allows students to recognize that cultural codes previously considered natural suddenly appear problematic and in need of reconsideration. Doing so also allows students to resituate themselves politically.

Where Berlin's usage of cultural study to teach writing has been challenged it has been based largely on how educators believe cultural studies can change students' political thought. Does the revelation of discursive discrepancies change political

positions or merely layer yet another discursive practice on top of those previously formulated? Marshall Alcorn, for instance, states that

> Berlin's theoretical description, however, contradicts [the offered] model of resolution. There is nothing in Berlin's postmodern theory to suggest that any resolution of conflict is possible. The postmodernist subject, unlike the humanist subject, is essentially a structure of discourse conflict; it has no mechanism or motivation for being anything other than such a structure of conflict. A teacher could never hope to change the structure of, or resolve the conflict in, a subject by merely adding more discourse or more conflict to the subject. The subject would not change in structure or belief; it would simple "be" a larger and more unpredictable pool of discourse and conflict. (Alcorn 340)

Bruce McComiskey, on the other hand, questions Berlin's pedagogy as leading only to what he calls "production criticism," "the examination of how cultural meaning is produced without concern for the semiotic force of its distributing context or the political force of critical consumption" (McComiskey 384). McComiskey asks how the critique of cultural codes empowers students to direct political change. For McComiskey, cultural critique must engage with rhetorical invention. "Critical consumption alone does not, in and of itself, lead to social reform; only careful rhetorical interventions into this cycle make possible the reforms that cultural studies seeks" (McComiskey 390). Similarly, Susan Miller argues that Berlin's version of a cultural studies informed composition classroom does not generate a writing practice. Miller claims that Berlin's pedagogy produces readers, not writers.

> By teaching texts rather than their making, by teaching awareness rather than rhetoric, and by teaching the power of meanings rather than the making of statements, we inadvertently reproduce a politics that is aware but passive. Rhetoric is not, that is, semiotics. And while it often suits us to equate the two (for reasons related more to professional politics than to

democracy), writing is not reading. (Technologies of Self? – Formation 499)

Julie Drew doesn't counter Miller but looks for the middle ground, opting to divert attention from Berlin's text driven pedagogy to cultural production in general. "Instead of looking to cultural studies for texts to analyze, we might attempt to help students conduct and incorporate analysis of the conditions in which they themselves produce cultural meaning – academic texts – as an integral part of their writing process" (Drew 417). While striving for an interventionist rhetorical strategy, these mergers of cultural studies and composition still have been critiqued as producing not politically aware activists who will make a future difference, but as Victor Vitanza argues, cynics. Vitanza asks if cultural critique under the weight of cynicism isn't being replaced with nostalgia. As Vitanza has stated on the Pre-Text discussion list, within both the political and compositional spheres nostalgia replaces concerns of class difference in postmodern culture. "'Critique' itself today has become an act of nostalgia" ("Economies of Decomposing a Discipline into a Nondiscipline"). This nostalgia, for Vitanza, leads to cynicism, not political action, as critical gestures allude to a romantic, counter-cultural legacy but change little in the contemporary situation.. Vitanza's advise to composition instruction is to tread carefully in its application of cultural studies to the writing curriculum.

> This is what I would openly suggest that cultural studies researchers – that is, you who are theorists and practitioners and others – DO: Not only teach the basic principles of critiquing the culture at all levels (I am not calling for the abolition of cultural studies!) but also and more so be vigilant now about the effects such teaching has on your students and consequently on the rest of us. On the Social fabric. (Part of our grossest national product is

cynicism!) . . . Do the students ever stop thinking and practicing racism, sexism, classism, age-ism; do they ever stop thinking and practicing their homophobia and self-hatred, etc.; or, do they, in taking on an understanding of false consciousness in your "class" rooms, only become more cynical in their acts of violence against human beings and themselves? In other words, do they know such thinking and acting are wrong but do it anyway? ("The Wasteland Grows" 700)

## Birmingham and Baraka

My interest in cultural study and writing stems from the ways these positions are framed within the 1964 inception of Birmingham thought and the overall collage of 1963. The Birmingham school foregrounds the need to study popular culture media forms as an entrance to ideology and power relations. Juxtaposed with Amiri Baraka's 1963 *Blues People*, the relationship between cultural studies and my collage surfaces. As I stated in the Introduction, Baraka questions the representation of African-Americans within American media and highlights the ways cool becomes a reaction to the appropriation of black cultural production and political involvement. Hall and Whannel, on the other hand, set in motion a theoretical movement largely responsible for the ways contemporary study of media and culture takes place. Both positions question how media affects representation. My larger question for cultural studies, though, is whether Berlin's argument, as informed by the Birmingham School, functions as the best application of cultural study to the teaching of writing. Does the uncovering of ideology grant the best method for dealing with power or discrepancies in racial representation? Does this activity actually offer a strategy of resistance or result in cynicism? If the strength of Baraka's understandings of appropriation and cool lies not in the question of representation, then where does it appear most relevant? How does Baraka's

appropriation fit in with cultural studies' concern that representation reveals or hides power structures? How does appropriation deal with the specific racial questions raised by James Baldwin's 1963 *The Fire Next Time*, "The only thing white people have that black people need, or should want, is power – and one holds power forever" (Baldwin 95-96).

To even approach these questions, we need to rethink the juxtaposition of cultural studies and 1963. In this sense, a text like Lerone Bennett's 1963 *The Black Mood* reveals another side of cultural studies emerging from this temporal date. Bennett teaches an African-American culture studies in 1963, a year before the formation of the Birmingham School. Like Baraka, Bennett treats issues of racial representation in American media and culture. But like contemporary cultural studies, Bennett engages in ideological critique . As Stuart Hall will later do, Bennett decodes the ideology of nation and race, choosing Abraham Lincoln as target. Bennett demonstrates how indoctrinated images, like Lincoln's, result from media constructions. Lincoln, Bennett claims, as the Great Emancipator is "Hollywood enshrined in history and history sucked of all possible meaning and content" because it ignores such moments as Lincoln's racist speech in the Douglas debate of 1858 (100). Along with Baraka, Bennett provides a place to examine cultural studies and ideology in the collage. The model comes from Baraka (appropriation), the strategy from Bennett (decoding). Working from these moments of 1963 and African-American concerns with power relationships in contemporary culture, I want to see if Baraka's work leads to alternative understandings of how appropriation becomes a tool for establishing and resisting power across racial, gendered, and class

positions. In other words, I want to reapply Baraka's appropriation to Bennett's system of decoding in order to develop the rhetoric of cool.

## The Role of Literature

The task for cultural studies is to rethink the ways media forms teach rhetorical strategies suitable to the discipline's political aims. The concerns of cultural studies alter when we think of them in terms of rhetoric; that is, in terms of how discourse is constructed. Even more so, the ways those concerns are played out in media complicate questions of cultural production. This chapter focuses on the role of one media form, literature, and its relationship to cool. In particular, I will discuss two genres of the 1950s and 1960s relevant to the rhetoric of cool: Beat writings and the revitalized detective genre, noir. My choices stem from the 1963 juxtaposition. Appearing in the time period leading up to and including 1963 are William Burroughs' *The Ticket That Exploded* and *Nova Express*, Jack Kerouac's *Visions of Gerard* and *Big Sur*, and Allen Ginsberg's collection of poetry *Reality Sandwiches*. Also in 1963, Jim Thompson's gritty *The Grifters* is published and Chester Himes' *Pinktoes* appears. These works provide me with departure points for discussions on the Beats and noir. The overlap comes by way of McLuhan who saw in Burroughs' work electronic culture put into print. "Burroughs is unique only in that he is attempting to reproduce in prose what we accommodate every day as a commonplace aspect of life in the electric age" ("Notes on Burroughs" 69). Similarly, McLuhan viewed the detective novel as a cool form of fiction. "In reading a detective story the reader participates as co-author simply because so much has been left out of the narrative" (*Understanding Media* 42). In Burroughs' work, noir plays a

decisive role as well. The introduction to *Naked Lunch*, for instance, begins with a noir-like scene; the narrator avoiding an approaching "flatfoot" as he makes his way through the big city streets. "I can feel the heat closing in, feel them out there making their moves, setting up their devil doll stool pigeons" (*Naked Lunch* 1). Reading these two genres together grants a different approach to applying literature within electronic rhetorical practices. These texts can serve as places to think of cool in relationship to literary production because of how they inform the electronic.

My purpose is not hermeneutical analysis. Instead, my interest concerns how cool functions in these texts and how these areas of American literature serve pedagogical instruction. This chapter takes up Henry Giroux's question regarding the teaching of cultural studies: "What is it about pedagogy that allows cultural studies theorists to ignore it?" ("Who Writes in a Cultural Studies Class?" 6) by focusing attention on literary forms. The juxtaposition of literature and cultural studies offers English studies an alternative focus. As Cary Nelson makes clear, "An alliance between literary studies and cultural studies properly entails English moving radically outward from texts to contexts and partly desacralizing the field's traditional objects of study" (Nelson 214). What do the techniques of the Beats and noir writers offer a rhetoric of cool? How do these genres inform the concerns of cultural study? How do they fit into my initial 1963 juxtaposition? 1963 promotes the collage format as a cool method of writing. Is this incompatible with the demands of cultural studies? This chapter includes readings of two literary genres as inclusions in the 1963 collage as a way of working with Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler's definition of cultural studies:

> The methodology of cultural studies provides an equally uneasy marker, for cultural studies in fact has no distinct methodology, no unique statistical, ethnomethodological, or textual analysis to call its own. Its methodology, ambiguous from the beginning, could best be seen as a bricolage. (2)

The bricolage understood here encompasses the overall juxtaposition of cultural study and literature as rhetorical informant.

## The Beats

Towards the end of his 1957 publication *Naked Lunch*, William Burroughs draws attention to 1963. "Hair, shit and blood spurt out 1963 on the wall . . . 'Yes sir, boys, the shit really hit the fan in '63,' said the tiresome old prophet can bore the piss out of you in any space-time direction . . ." (*Naked Lunch* 226). Burroughs' concentration on 1963 functions as a guide for considering the Beats' contribution to the rhetoric of cool. Found in *Naked Lunch's* "Atrophied Preface," the concluding chapter to his reflections on a culture driven mad by technology, racism, sexism, and homophobia, Burroughs' comments on 1963 serve as a focal point for including the Beats within a rhetoric of cool. The "Atrophied Preface" offers a set of instructions for how the book is to be read.

> You can cut into *Naked Lunch* at any intersection point . . . I have written many prefaces. . . *Naked Lunch* is a blueprint, a How-To Book. (*Naked Lunch* 224)

Burroughs' instructions for reading his work are the instructions for how literature informs cool. Literature becomes a how-to, a guide for extracting lessons on how to write cool. The stylistics, language, concerns with representation, and attitudes of Beat literature all contribute to the rhetoric of cool. Previously, the idea of extracting lessons from the Beats has been used sporadically as a way of examining their work.

Digital artist and media theorist Mark Amerika, for example, sees in the Beats anti-establishment rhetorical strategies. Amerika asks if contemporary writers can utilize certain opportunities available in digital writing the way the Beats worked within the parameters of the 1960s underground publishing scene.

> One of the main reasons the Beats were able to flourish was because the underground print scene was so hot, it was hard for the mainstream media not to try and put their hands all over it (were the media trying to cool it down or were they just branding themselves and their generation something countercultural?). Now, whereas it's true that the underground print scene is still active and interesting, it is not quite as hot as it was then. EVERYONE knows that the battle for free-expression, all in the name of expanding consciousness, is happening in the electronic pop media, that is, digital culture. ("In the Factory")

Amerika's position, however, is unique. The majority of work on Beat literature ignores either the publishing conditions the Beats wrote in, or the writing itself. Instead, critical focus takes the lives of Beat writers as a departure point for analysis. Mel Ash's *Beat Spirit: The Way of the Beat Writers as a Living Experience* offers a nostalgic reference on how one might live one's life based on the ideas of the Beats. Evaluating the Beats as a spiritual as well as a non-conformist and anti-establishment movement, Ash's work uses the Beats as a method of both self-reflection and resistance. Ash proposes that the Beats be used to

> Fight back against cynicism, despair and unthinking conformity. It's my way of sharing what has been, for me, a lifelong experience of learning; my way of honoring the tradition that has made my own life larger; my way of passing on the "tribal" wisdom of the Beat elders to those of us still young enough, at hear or in age, to push back the boundaries of limitation to discover what it truly means to be fully human. (Ash 3)

Ash's view of the Beats is what Thomas Frank calls "the *sine qua non* of dissidence, the model for aspiring poets, rock stars, or indeed anyone who feels vaguely artistic of alienated" ("Why Johnny Can't Dissent" 33). *Beat Spirit* assumes an authenticity of alienation in Beat culture and offers it as a way of dealing with the global society of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Ash incorporates writing lessons, singing exercises, games, and other activities derived from Beat lifestyles as ways to adapt the Beat spirit to more contemporary concerns emanating from a tense, fast paced society overwhelmed by the demands of consumerism and profit. Unlike Ash, however, I am not considering the ways Beat writers' lives provide resistance strategies. Instead, my focus is on the rhetorical strategies *the writings* provide.

Less playful than Ash, but similar in purpose, is Omar Swartz's *The View From On The Road: The Rhetorical Vision of Jack Kerouac*. Like Ash, Swartz argues that Kerouac's *On the Road* offers a rhetoric for life strategies. In particular, Swartz feels that the rhetoric of Kerouac presents a method for struggling against the institutional order, which in the temporal case of his work includes Republican Party politics. Swartz romanticizes the nonconformist legacy of the Beats as "signifying the struggle between the individual and the bourgeois ego" (Swartz 13). For Swartz, the cult of marginality that accompanies Beat legends or myths overrides the work itself. The figures become mythical, heroes of a revolution that, we can argue, never took place. Unlike Norman Mailer's self-directed *Advertisements for Myself*, which created a mythic role for Mailer the critic as revolutionary, Swartz's version of Beat culture lacks irony or thorough

critique. Instead, Swartz sees in the Beats the origins of contemporary anti-establishment politics. Swartz claims that

> Aspects of Kerouac's rhetorical vision can be seen in the growing concern for ecology and cooperative business, for example. As long as remnants of the 1960s experience remain, Kerouac's vision will remain, long after his name cease to have any cultural resonance. In other words, Kerouac helped create an experience that is larger than himself. (Swartz 101)

Swartz's belief that readers of *On the Road* are "encouraged to see social deviance as social and political action" reduces to the Beats to the role of delinquents (Swartz 73). Kerouac functions as the ultimate teenage rebel; to go "on the road" is to resist the rules and standards enforced by the parental authorities we know as governmental institutions. Swartz's work raises the larger question: are the actions of real life figures or fictional characters the only models for political resistance the Beats teach?

Discussion along the lines of Ash and Swartz concentrate on the lives of the Beat writers. Parallels are drawn between characters in poems and novels to their so-called real life equivalents. They emphasize the ways Beat writers exemplify political or literary movements. Ronna Johnson, for instance, understands Kerouac the person as a demonstration of postmodernism.

> Both his literature and the trajectory of his career as a public figure attest that as he produced his innovative texts, Kerouac confronted a postwar era neither fitted to modernism nor yet committed to the postmodern. ..The collapse of distinctions between his media image and fiction produced Kerouac as icon, but also marks the postmodern condition his literature intimated. (Johnson 23)

While most media figures (literary or otherwise) display some aspect of iconicity, special attention falls to the Beats. Beat personalities as pop cultural icons transform into models

of social and political resistance regardless of how they behaved while alive (whether Kerouac, for example, considered himself a revolutionary or simply a drunk). When these figures appear in nonconformist situations (as in Swartz's example, the usage of Kerouac's image to sell Volvos in 1995), cries of sell-out abound. In the case of Burroughs, his appearance in a 1994 Nike advertisement pushed Beat supporters to question the opposition Burroughs once expressed towards advertising. "For God's sake, don't let that Coca-Cola thing out," Burroughs' 1964 *Nova Express* began (3). Suddenly, it appeared that Burroughs was letting consumerism out after all and following eagerly behind. The value shift created by such moments leaves a nostalgic '60s viewpoint tainted and problematic, as Leslie Savan notes.

> The critical question is, who's subverting whom? Just as 55 years later Burroughs's tribute to trusty Cascade leaves little doubt as to who's on top in that exchange, a glance at the Nike ad, unfortunately, is equally unmistakable, regardless of how "cool" Burroughs may come off. (Savan 50)

The reason for this stems from a widely accepted narrative of the Beats as revolutionary in life style, a notion that belongs to an overall account of counter-culture mythology. As Thomas Frank states, this narrative of '60s sentiment proclaims that "conformity and consumerism were challenged by a new ethos that found an enemy in the 'Establishment,' celebrated difference and diversity, and sought to maximize the freedom and 'self-realization' of the individual" (*The Conquest of Cool* 15). The anti-establishment rhetoric of advertising regarding cool, Hazel Warlaumont writes, begins in the '63/64 time period.

The [anti-establishment/hip] jargon obviously miffed the traditionalists in advertising who also took exception to the use of the word "cool" in ads especially in an early 1964 ad for Carstairs whiskey, whose headline read "Carstairs…first to go *cool!*" and referred to its proof as 80.6 "cool proof." An *Advertising Age* columnist disapproved of the "jive talk," the pun, and the copy that didn't' make sense, according to him, referring to it as "beatnik language." Advertisers were also told at conferences that "the biggest mistake advertisers make is trying to talk like teems, to teens"; it's patronizing them with the "cool, man, cool" kind of language, one speaker cautioned.. (156)

For Frank, Burroughs' participation in a Nike commercial is no "different from the official folklore of American capitalism. What's changed is not Burroughs, but business itself" ("Why Johnny Can't Dissent" 36). As Frank demonstrates, marketing strategists often find anti-corporate rhetoric suitable for their own purposes. "The new hipsters who control the boardrooms of advertising have a vision," Savan claims. "Multiculti, cool, affectless, and wired back in upon itself as an endless loop of global marketing" (Savan 51). Evident by 1963, anti-establishment ideology set forth by the Beats became the principle marketing campaign of such corporate mainstays as Pepsi. "In 1963, Pepsi streamlined the cumbersome 'Think Young' slogan with a memorable consumer call to arms: 'Come Alive! You're in the Pepsi Generation'" (*The Conquest of Cool* 175). Instead of belonging to the Beat generation, '60s consumers could find themselves endorsing the same ethos among the Pepsi generation.[2] The youthful spirit begun in Kerouac's *On the Road* made its way into Pepsi's advertising budget. Burroughs lambasting corporate America in his 1963 *Yage Letters* (and later reprinted in

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[2] Pepsi's counter culture slogan opposes Coke's tamer 1963 ad: "Things Go Better With Coke."

*Nova Express*) quickly became a Madison Avenue entry into the pockets of youth culture:

> LISTEN TO MY LAST WORDS ANY WORLD. LISTEN ALL YOU BOARDS SYNDICATES AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE EARTH. AND YOU POWER POWERS BEHIND WHAT FILTH DEALS CONSUMMATED IN WHAT LAVATORY TO TAKE WHAT IS NOT YOURS. TO SELL THE GROUND FROM UNBORN FEET. LISTEN. WHAT I HAVE TO SAY IS FOR ALL MEN EVERYWHERE. I REPEAT FOR ALL. NO ONE IS EXCLUDED. FREE TO ALL WHO PAY. FREE TO ALL WHO PAIN PAY. (*Yage Letters* 65 emphasis Burroughs')

Burroughs' manifesto turns into what Stewart Ewen has called the corporate manipulation of counterculture rhetoric. Ewen's example of how reactionary spirit becomes distorted is a 1987 *Changing Times* magazine television ad:

> The spot opens on a hippie, circa 1967, who proclaims "Capitalism stinks, man." He is now president of a high-tech firm and worth $3 million, according to a message typed on the screen. Next, a woman cursing the establishment at a 1973 protest rally. Now she runs the Little Lady Charm school. According to the historical narrative of the commercial, both of these people have outgrown the naiveté of their youth and have come into their own as embodiments of the status quo. (Ewen 256)

The radical attitudes taken up by the Beats have become a commercial goldmine for the establishment that those very attitudes originally intended to disengage from. "The idiom of subculture had entered the market place of style. In the process, meaning was lost. It had been reduced to the status of a *commodity*. Whatever significance or value the expression may have had in the context of its earlier development, that value was now outweighed by its exchange value, its ability to make something marketably 'hip'" (Ewen 251). Indirectly, Ewen describes Baudrillard's cool discourse, the place where signs are

exchanged against each other as opposed to the real. Cool as attitude becomes commutated into cool the commodity.

What observations like these tell us is that the question of who owns the '60s, as Rick Perlstein also writes in an essay of the same name, may not be a simple one. Or as George Lipsitz states, "The enduring hold of the 1960s on the imagination of the present has been pernicious"(Lipsitz 17). Does the system of values developed during this decade reflect conservative or reactionary thinking? How does the detached style of cool supported by such literary groups as the Beats become a marketing strategy for companies like Levi's Jeans[3] who are "very eager to communicate the energy and urgency they are bringing to bear on cracking the code of cool: its mutability and morality, its fickle and elusive essence – and above all, the question of how, once lost, cool can be recaptured" (Espen 54).

When the Beat ethos is contradicted, defenders of Beat personalities are alarmed. More problematic than these contradictions, however, may be the overemphasis on recapturing cool via the Beats' marginality. Cultural studies' persistent need to achieve resistance strategies often highlights the role of subcultures or marginal groups, paying heavy attention to the lives of marginal figures. Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* remains one of the best examples of such a practice. Hebdige reads the punk movement's style as a "challenge to hegemony" at "the level of appearances; that is, the level of signs" (*Subculture* 17). Hebdige's reading of punk style reveals a critique

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[3] Incidentally, Levi's introduced its now popular pre-shrunk jeans in 1963.

of 1970s capitalism. "Subcultures are therefore expressive forms but what they express is, in the last instance, a fundamental tension between those in power and those condemned to subordinate positions and second class lives" (*Subculture* 132). For the Beats, Kerouac's position as a marginal figure promoting a marginalized lifestyle leads to general observations regarding the relationship between Beat style and mainstream culture, such as that made by Granville Jones in 1963:

> Kerouac's rejection of middle-class values has led to a search for values of his own. In this search he has identified himself with all outsiders from accepted society – the Negro, the jazz musician, the hipster, the homosexual, even the dope addict and the bum. (Jones 30)

Unlike Hebdige's study, though, the emphasis lies mostly with Kerouac's personality. My purpose differs in that, while it recognizes Beat marginality as belonging to a cultural history of marginality within cool, it seeks to consider how the Beats' attitudes and stylistics offer a method for constructing electronic discourse. One may read resistance in Beat lifestyle or in the content of their writings, but more importantly, the structure of Beat discourse, I argue, allows for cultural critique in ways that reflect rhetorical strategies.

The marginality of the figures' personal lives in many ways is irrelevant beyond its identification with other marginal groups (i.e. African-Americans) because the question of how marginal the Beats were remains problematic. Even Kerouac eventually turned his back on the '60s counterculture. A letter to Granville Jones expressed Kerouac's dissatisfaction with how Beat ideology became too reactionary as it carried over into the '60s. "The vision of America is being destroyed now by the beatnik

movement which is not the 'beat generation' I proposed any more but a big move-in from intellectual dissident wrecks of all kinds and now even anti-American, American haters of all kinds with placards who call themselves beatniks" (qtd Jones 36). In 1962's *Big Sur*, Kerouac articulated a similar concern; his main character Duluoz complains, "I'm supposed to be the King of the Beatniks according to the newspapers, so but at the same time I'm sick and tired of all the endless enthusiasm of new young kids trying to know me and pour out all lives into me so that I'll jump up and down and say yes yes that's right, which I can't do anymore" (109).

Instead of returning to the Beats for their personality traits alone, a rhetoric of cool considers the ways counter-culture ideology (in this case, as detailed in literature) informs cool. The role of the counter-culture, Thomas Frank reminds, remains important if not polemical. "The story of the counterculture – and of insurgent youth culture generally – now resides somewhere near the center of our national self-understanding, both as the focus of endless new generations of collective youth-liberation fantasies and as the sort of cultural treason imagined by various reactionaries" (*The Conquest of Cool* 32). How Beat ideology makes its way into mainstream and electronic discourse is my focus. What follows first, then, is a discussion of two major Beat figures and the ways they contribute to a rhetoric of cool.

### Burroughs

While a rhetoric of cool works from the Birmingham School inception in the time period immediately following 1963, an alternative approach to cultural studies' understanding of power relations in discourse comes from William S. Burroughs.

Burroughs' 1963 critical reception in the *Times Literary Supplement*,[4] in which his usage of collage to challenge control was both praised and dismissed, remains relevant to both cultural studies and composition. Burroughs understood in the early '60s the concerns which would eventually become those of cultural studies: ideology, power, and control. Instead of observing discursive contradictions as a method of undermining power relations (Berlin's position), Burroughs felt that individual empowerment in the electronic age would come through the tools media employ to deliver their message: juxtaposition and cut and paste techniques. Burroughs' work attempts to mirror the methods of electronic, communication devices (tape recorders, computers, television, and film) by way of a jumbled, fragmented discourse meant to blur the boundaries between humans and machines.

The method Burroughs uses is the "cut-up." The cut-up involves cutting and pasting together separately pieces of writing as a way of constructing narrative. The cut-up method entails taking a page and cutting it down the middle twice so that four sections remain. One then rearranges the sections in random order to create a new page. Variations of the four section cut are permissible and can lead to even more juxtapositions. The cut-up derives from understandings of the power of technology to create association by pointing to the relationship between technology and collage. "The cut-up method brings to writers the collage, which has been used by painters for fifty years. And used by the moving and still camera. In fact all street shots from movie or still

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[4] Excerpts from the original essay "Ugh" by John Willet and the responses that followed have been reprinted in Jennie Skerl and Robin Lydenberg's *William S. Burroughs At the Front: Critical Reception, 1959-1989*.

cameras are by the unpredictable factors of passersby and juxtaposition cut-ups" (Burroughs and Gysin 29). The cut-up can be applied to any text, any sound recording, and any filmic representation. As a writing strategy, its purpose is to undermine the dominant ideology of a given text, to reduce "control symbols pounded to word and image dust; crumpled cloth bodies of the vast control machine" (*Ticket That Exploded* 31). Burroughs, Timothy Murphy states, "insists that cutting up a text that is explicitly dedicated to a certain goal will reveal the hidden motives of the text and its author, a thesis that he tests repeatedly on mass media texts, which appear often in the trilogy [of *The Soft Machine*, *The Ticket That Exploded*, and *Nova Express*]" (*Wising Up The Marks* 105). The cut-ups' application within cultural study (the critique of power relations) and technology (using technology as resistance) offers a strategy for cool writing. Burroughs' particular usage of the cut-up in the time period leading up to and following 1963 (the 1962 *The Ticket That Exploded* and 1964 *Nova Express*) points specifically to a new technology of the time, the tape recorder, as a subversive medium. "The simplest variety of cut up on tape can be carried out with one machine . . . creating arbitrary juxtapositions you will notice that the arbitrary cuts in are appropriate" (*Ticket That Exploded* 207).

What Burroughs saw in the tape recorder, 1963 popular culture understood as merely a vehicle for home sound recording. Reflected in a 1963 advertisement for a Roberts reel to reel tape recorder, sound recording devices were marketed to consumers interested in music appreciation, the pleasure of listening to favorite singers or musicians in the privacy of one's home. The Roberts' ad, for example, features Lawrence Welk standing amid the printed slogan, "When great performers get together, one is always a

Roberts." 1963 tape recorder usage ignored the ability to manipulate sound for editing, favoring instead a receptive relationship with technology. Similarly, a 1963 advertisement for the Pentax H-3 camera reads "Square" in a bold heading. Beneath, the text the ad states, "There are those among us who think the Honywell Pentax H-3 is square. They're right." The pun on the camera's shape and non-counter culture affiliation (it's square, not hip) also reveals a passivity on the user's part. "It includes everything you need to take superb pictures and nothing more," the ad reads. Burroughs' work contrasts with mainstream advertising by proposing these mediums as cool (not square) because they can be used as tools of ideological critique, as ways to confront dominant power systems, and not as entertainment units. Neither Roberts nor Pentax could have imagined Burroughs' Subliminal Kid as a potential customer. The Subliminal Kid, one of many collagist Burroughs creations who either search out modes of resistance to technology or succumb to technology, "had recorder in tracks and moving film mixing arbitrary intervals and agents moving with the word and image of tape recorders" (*Nova Express* 148). The power Burroughs saw in 1963 technology, and that characters like the Subliminal Kid manipulated, can today be applied to new media in general.

Just as print was once a new technology that challenged the hand-written culture of medieval scribes, Burroughs' cut-up is the model for the emerging electronic discourse in the post war era, a model similar to that simultaneously proposed by McLuhan. Burroughs' cut-up resembles McLuhan's understanding of the relationship between people and technology, technology being an extension of people (or as McLuhan phrased it – "of man").

> A writing machine that shifts one half one text and half the other through a
> page frame on conveyor belts – (The proportion of half one text half the
> other is important corresponding as it does to the two halves of the human
> organism). (*Ticket That Exploded* 65)

Unlike McLuhan, Burroughs admires modern technology but also fears its power

of manipulation. The key, for Burroughs, is to counter institutional usage of technology

by reverting the dominant order's methods. If collage is the medium of the newspaper or

advertising, as suggested by McLuhan, collage also becomes the means for resisting the

language of these mediums. Burroughs' texts suggest both technology and the cut-up as

potential writing strategies which grant writers access to an otherwise closed institutional

system, what Burroughs refers to as "symbol books of the all powerful board that had

controlled thought feeling and movement of a planet with iron claws of pain and pleasure

from birth to death" (*Ticket That Exploded* 30-31). Burroughs extends his concerns over

how drugs and institutional systems control people to the notion that language, too, exerts

control; it creates a virus infecting everyday discourse. With the cut-up, one has the

possibility, in theory, of breaking that control. Burroughs and collaborator Byron Gysin

describe the process in *The Third Mind*:

> The Burroughs machine, systematic and repetitive, simultaneously
> disconnecting and reconnecting – it disconnects the concept of reality that
> has been imposed on us and then plugs normally dissociated zones into the
> same sector - eventually escapes from the control of its manipulator.
> (Burroughs and Gysin 17)

The cut-up employs shock and conflict as its force, what Burroughs labels "the

nova technique": "The basic nova technique is very simple: Always as many insoluble

conflicts as possible and always aggravate existing conflicts" (*Ticket That Exploded* 54-

55). The conflicts inherent in collage techniques allow Burroughs the ability to critique political, social, and cultural events and attitudes. Shock comes from the unexpected juxtapositions that result. By gathering pieces of other texts (newspapers, sound recordings, poetry, literature, interviews,) Burroughs rearranges the collected material and splices them into his own cut and pasted work. Film becomes the analogy of the power of juxtaposition.

> Word evokes image does it not? – Try it – Put an image track on screen and accompany it with any sound track – Now play the sound track back alone and watch the image track fill in – So? What is word? – Maya – Maya – Illusion – Rub out the word and the image track goes with it. . . Image is trapped in word – Do you need words? (*Ticket That Exploded* 145)

Burroughs' usage of shock within the framework of film repeats Sergei Eisenstein's desire for a film dialectic that would create a fourth dimension in cinema.

> In the realm of art this dialectical principle of the dynamic is embodied in CONFLICT as the essential basic principle of the existence of every work of art and every form. FOR ART IS ALWAYS CONFLICT:
> 1. because of its social mission,
> 2. because of its nature,
> 3. because of its methodology. (93 emphasis Eisenstein's)

Eisenstein felt that the shock created from the juxtaposition of unlike image and text could serve as a pedagogical tool. Such juxtapositions create associations in the viewer that can be guided to fit a particular mode of instruction. For Eisenstein, the intellectual montage he sought to create through juxtaposition functioned as a way to teach Marxism to an illiterate populace. For Burroughs, shock teaches a society to question the technology it willingly absorbs into its daily routine. Reaction to the shock of Burroughs'

work often centers on its graphic depiction of murder, homosexual rape, and drug usage, as in this passage from *Naked Lunch*:

> Blind boys grope out of huge pies, deteriorated schizophrenics pop from a rubber cunt, boys with horrible skin diseases rise from a black pond (sluggish fish nibble yellow turds on the surface). (80)

The content, however, is secondary to the method. We can think of Burroughs' shock, the nova technique, as belonging to a rhetoric of cool because of its ability to force new realizations, to jar a populace into questioning how ideology is constructed. While Burroughs' writing is graphic, the content does not deliver the shock as much as the juxtapositions do. "Once machine lines are cut, the enemy is helpless" (*Ticket That Exploded* 111). Once traditional argumentative and reasoning strategies are broken, the shock of the strange takes over. The nova technique precedes current attempts to undermine institutional power with displays of shock, the efforts of Cultural Jammers whose purpose is to thwart commercial interests and the commodification of global culture. Contemporary Culture Jammers apply Burroughs' theories on the Web, in advertising, and in print media, not in graphic displays of junkies or sexuality, but in innovative, do it yourself, attacks on corporate interests. These demonstrations become cultural studies inspired acts of political resistance that follow Burroughs' logic by recontextualizing the original source of their critique. As Mark Dery cites,

> "Jamming" is CB slang for the illegal practice of interrupting radio broadcasts or conversations between fellow hams with lip farts, obscenities, and other equally jejune hijinx. Culture jamming, by contrast, is directed against an ever more intrusive, instrumental technoculture whose operant mode is the manufacture of consent through the manipulation of symbols. ("Culture Jamming")

The Cultural Jammers adopt a counter-culture rhetoric and "believe cultural jamming will become to our era what civil rights was to the '60s" (Lasn xi). They function as academic outsiders, and as Dery indicates, "There is academy hacking--cultural studies, conducted outside university walls, by insurgent intellectuals" (Culture Jamming). Cultural Jammers echo Jules Henry's 1963 *Culture Against Man*: "The second modern commandment: 'Thou shall consume!" is the natural complement of the first --'Create more desire!'" (20). Henry understood technological advents of the post War era as building a culture of consumption intent on only having fun, on only fulfilling immediate desire.

> Only a people who have learned to decontrol their impulses can consume as we do. So the consequence of technological drivenness is the creation of a people who, though reared to support it – by being trained to heroic feats of consumption – are quietly undermining it by doing the least they can rather than the most, not only because it is hard to get anything out of the system but also because they have stayed up so late the night before having fun! (Henry 44)

Cultural Jammers like Subvertise[5] see themselves as proliferating the "Art of Cultural Resistance." Through violent attacks on billboards and print media, the medium becomes the message. Advertising turns on itself via a recontextualized anti-consumerism stand. Adbusters, the self-described "cultural jammer headquarters," positions itself similarly. It has made a name for itself by propagating the jamming of popular advertisements as a means to displace the supposed fun or entertaining values corporate entities promote. Adbusters seeks to uncover advertising's political or financial

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[5] See http://www.subvertise.org/starthere.html.

motivations often taken for granted by consumers. In one print ad produced by the group, a hospital monitor switches a patient's vital signs with the McDonald's logo; a label on the monitor reads: "Big Mac Attack." In another ad, Joe Camel, Camel cigarettes' logo of the cool figure making the scene, transforms into Joe Chemo. In yet another, Kool cigarettes' slogan "Utter Cool" is replaced by "Utter Fool."

The spirit of consumption that Henry asks to be destabilized, and that the Adbusters and Subadvertisers direct attention to, eventually became the focal point of the cool, detached work of the Pop Artists: Andy Warhol's Brillo paintings or Clas Oldenburg's 1962 Two *Cheeseburgers with Everything (Dual Hamburgers)* or 1963 *Soft Typewriter*[6] (a commentary on writing as consumerism). These artists "jammed" accepted notions of consumption by recontextualizing the very items contemporary culture uncritically purchases and consumes (like a hamburger). They cut-up commercial aesthetics for critical purposes. The coolness of the Pop Artists functions in the ways they detached the products of consumption from their everyday usage for a critical response. Nevertheless, as Dick Hebdige reminds, Pop Art often attracts denunciation for what appears to be an endorsement of consumerism.

> Pop, it is frequently suggested, was indulgent and decadent because it refused to adept a morally consistent and responsible line on the commercially structured popular culture which it invades, plunders, and helps to perpetuate. Its ambiguity is culpable because pop exploits its own contradictions instead of seeking to resolve them. It is morally reprehensible because it allows itself to be contained by the diminished

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[6] In *Nova Express*, Burroughs writes: "It is machine strategy and the machine can be redirected – Have written connection in The Soft Typewriter the machine can only repeat your instructions since it can not create anything – The operation is very technical – Look at photomontage" (85). The coincidence with Oldenburg's work marks a place where 1963 produces patterns through cut and paste juxtapositions.

possibilities that capitalism makes available. ("In Poor Taste: Notes on Pop" 83)

Like the critics of Pop Art in the early '60s, Adbusters' Kalle Lasn argues that any connection with mass consumption beyond blatant dismissal is a reflection of an oppressive cool. Her definition of cool makes it the source, not the solution, of the problems consumerism creates.

> A heavily manipulative corporate ethos drives our culture. Cool is indispensable – and readily, endlessly, dispensed. You can get it on every corner (for the right price), though it's highly addictive and its effects are short-lived. If you're here for cool today, you'll almost certainly be back for more tomorrow. American cool is a global pandemic. Communities, traditions, cultural heritages, sovereignties, whole histories are being replaced by a barren American monoculture. (Lasn xiii-xiv)

Lasn's position opposes what the rhetoric of cool draws from Burroughs, an early cultural jammer. Lasn's cool reflects the ways American culture promotes consumer products as a dominate lifestyle.

> 'Cool' used to mean unique, spontaneous, compelling. The coolest kid was the one everyone wanted to be like but no one quite could, because her individuality was utterly distinct. Then 'cool' changed. Marketers got hold of it and reversed its meaning. Now you're cool if you are not unique – if you have the look and feel that bear the unmistakable stamp of America™. Hair by Paul Mitchell. Khakis by The Gap.[7] Car by BMW. Attitude by Nike. Pet phrases by Letterman. Politics by Bill Maher. Cool is the opiate

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[7] For further work on how retailers like the GAP play off of the images of the Beats, see the collection of essays from the *Baffler, Commodify Your Dissent.* Thomas Frank's "Why Johnny Can't Dissent" states "The GAP may have since claimed Ginsberg and *USA TODAY* may run feature stories about the brilliance of the beloved Kerouac, but the rebel race continues today regardless, with ever-heightening shit-references calculated to scare Jesse Helms, talk about sex and smack that is supposed to bring the electricity of real life, and more determined defiance of the repressive rules and mores of the American 1950s – rules and mores that by now we know only from the movies" (33).
In "Back in Black: Here Come the Beatniks!" Maura Mahoney writes, "The GAP's 1993 celebrities-who-wore-khakis ad campaign included Jack Kerouac, looking hardened and compelling in pants you too can buy. . . His aesthetic, the transcendence of sensation and onrushing action, and his pursuit of slick style over substantive content, lend themselves nicely both the advertising and that ineluctable late-twentieth century 'art form' – the video image" (60).

of our time, and over a couple of generations, we have grown dependent
on it to maintain our identities of inclusion (Lasn 113)

As I will show in Chapter Three, cool does work from the position of

consumerism. But unlike Lasn, I do not see cool as entirely a re-inscription of corporate

drive. In consumer culture, cool involves the appropriative logic that Thomas Frank

describes as the strategy of recontextualizing counter-culture attitudes for commercial

purposes.

> Madison Avenue's favorite term for the counterculture was "the Now
> Generation," a phrase that implied absolute up-to-dateness in every sense.
> It also intimated what admen felt was the young's most important
> characteristic as consumers: their desire for immediate gratification, their
> craving for the new, their intolerance for the slow-moving, the penurious,
> the thrifty. (*The Conquest of Cool* 121)

For the rhetoric of cool, corporate appropriation becomes a lesson for electronic writing.

Academic scholarship does not turn to appropriation in order to sell products, but rather

to learn the methods of persuasion conducive to the new media. Appropriation and

recontextualization reveal powerful tools for composition. Leaving aside the moral issue

of corporate appropriation, the rhetorical strategies that worked for the counterculture

(the ideas Swartz, for example, sees as valuable) recontextualized (Burroughs' position

on media) become a model for pedagogical work in cultural studies. Frank's argument

demonstrates the power of cool as appropriation in consumerism, how advertisers "quite

naturally came to adopt nonconformity as a central element of their corporate

vocabularies" (*The Conquest of Cool* 136). Such a position has also been taken up by

cultural jamming, which specifically connects appropriation and advertising in its critical

gestures. While Lasn dismisses cool, I would argue that Adbusters, the anti-consumerism

organization of which Lasn maintains membership, utilizes cool writing for political aims. In the spirit of '60s nonconformity (to which Burroughs' cut-up belongs), Adbusters recontextualize print ads (like Obsession) and represent them (Obsession Fetish) as critique. Adbusters' rejection of consumer culture promotes a digital non-conformism influenced by Beat ideology. Adbusters' method is a cool one not because of content but because of form. In yet another example, Adbusters attacks cigarette companies for using cool as a marketing ploy by producing an ad with two generic-like boxes of Marlboro and Camel followed by the heading "Losing Their Cool."[8] The word cool attracts attention to both the original product, the ideology cool carries (youthful trends), and the critique. But cool is, as well, the practice which appropriates Marlboro and Camel as a way of turning marketing upon itself. In Chapter Three, I will show how similar strategies play out in film and music.

### Practicing a Burroughs Cultural Jamming

Cultural jammers work from Burroughs' decision to put into practice the method theorized. Burroughs doesn't just write about the cut-up; he uses it to explain its potential. Throughout *The Ticket That Exploded* and *Nova Express*, for instance, passages explain how the cut-up functions through the application of the same process. Through the cut-up, Burroughs teaches how to employ cool as rhetorical practice. "The purpose of my writing is to expose and arrest Nova Criminals," Burroughs writes, referring to those who hold power over media production (*Nova Express* 7). Ihab Hassan's 1963 "The

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[8] The images were displayed in a January 1997 *New York Times* Op-Ed piece by Adbuster Tibor Kalman which read, "I'm a designer. I've worked all my life to make different products (including cigarettes) cool. Now I'm thinking about how to make smoking uncool."

Subtracting Machine: The Work of William Burroughs" pushes the point further. Hassan describes Burroughs' methods in terms of language and power. "The aim is to cut oneself out of language, cut oneself from language. The aim is to escape a world made by words and perhaps to discover another. Chance denies the order we have brought ourselves to accept, an order which Burroughs feels has viciously betrayed us" (57). Hassan adds, "Burroughs seems to have devised in the cut-up method a means not so much of liberating man as of declaring his bondage" (61). The cut-up acts as a descriptive, expository writing (we are bonded to consumer/political ideologies) and an argumentative writing that immediately prompts action (the cut-up presents an alternative to a dominant ideology). For Katherine Hayles, bondage to hegemonic practice disrupts within Burroughs' image of the junkie, itself a collage of institutional practices out of control.

> The junkie's body is a harbinger of the postmodern mutant, for it demonstrates how presence yields to patterns of assembly and disassembly created by the flow of junk-as-information through points of amplification and resistance. The characters of information narratives include, then, an emphasis on mutation and transformation as a central thematic for bodies within the text as well as for the bodies of texts. (Hayles 272)

Burroughs' lessons for a rhetoric of cool include the process of transformation and mutation emphasized in the role of the junkie as well as the cut-up. The addictiveness of cool that Lasn claims belongs to consumer culture translates as the junkie for Burroughs. Mass appetites for consumption make American society one of junkies. The junkie informs cultural obsession with mass consumption.

> Shooting PG is a terrible hassle, you have to burn out the alcohol first, then freeze out the camphor and draw this brown liquid off with a dropper –

> have to shoot it in the vein or you get an abscess, and usually end up with
> an abscess no matter where you shoot it. (*Naked Lunch* 14)

Drug usage is consumer and information fetish. In Burroughs' work, shooting drugs

equals public ingestion of commodities (including information as commodity) brought on

by innovations in the electronic age. The mechanical age of reproduction not only allows

manufacturers to produce more goods, but it also allows information networks to produce

more news (also purchasable) at a faster pace. As a result, addiction forms. Information

cannot be digested quick enough before the need for more information takes over.

Burroughs' junkie as information narrative resembles Kathy Acker's vision of  a

futuristic library system called MAINLINE.

> The library was the American Intelligence's central control network, its
> memory, what constituted its perception and understanding. (A hypothesis
> of the political uses of culture.) It was called MAINLINE. The perception
> based on culture is a drug, a necessity for sociopolitical control. (*Empire of
> the Senseless* 36)

Acker recognizes information addiction as a consequence of writing. "The only

question that matters is why there are rules that govern writing and speech. Who is trying

to control writing and speech, how and why? This is what Burroughs calls fiction; these

questions about social and political control in regard to identity and language" ("The

Wild Girls" 32). The stranglehold of addiction can be broken through writing as well,

i.e., the cut-up. To overcome addiction, the language of the information age (in essence –

the drug) must be turned against itself, cut-up, reassembled. For the Situationists, the

French  anti-art movement of the late '50s and '60s, widespread addiction within mass

consumption demands a similar response. In the 1963 "Basic Banalities II," Raoul Vaneigem wrote:

> The organization controlling the material equipment of our everyday life is such that what could potentially enable us to construct it richly plunges us instead into a poverty of abundance. Alienation becomes all the more intolerable as each convenience promises freedom and turns out to be only one more burden. We are enslaved by the means of liberation. (Vaneigem)

The Situationists, led by Guy Debord, referred to this enslavement as the spectacle. "The spectacle is the moment when the commodity has attained the total occupation of social life. Not only is the relation to the commodity visible but it is all one sees: the world one sees is its world." (Debord 42). A flourishing consumer culture produces false understandings of how the social order is constructed. Products are seen as natural manifestations of economic success; the means by which they are produced and consumed remain ignored. "The commodity is this factually real illusion, and the spectacle is its general manifestation" (Debord 47).

In 1963, the Situationist response to consumer addiction was theft. "They practiced intellectual terrorism, and inseparable from that practice was the theft of intellectual property" (*Lipstick Traces* 178). The Situationists preached the practice of *détournement*, a method of recontextualizing (taking without permission) past artistic works for new, political purposes. Questions of copyright, a product of consumerism and the capitalist enterprise, became dismissed in an attempt to democratize expression. In "A Users Guide to Détournement," Debord and Gil Wolman wrote, "It is in fact necessary to eliminate all remnants of the notion of personal property in this area. The appearance of new necessities outmodes previous 'inspired' works. They become obstacles,

dangerous habits. The point is not whether we like them or not. We have to go beyond them" (Debord and Wolman). Détournement uses commutation principles as argumentation. Books, films, literature can be remade as political statements. Because these media formations comprise the objects of everyday discourse, they are the vehicles of resistance. Détournement, like Burroughs' cut-up, strives to distort the language of original context.

The idea of reusing a past work for a new purpose is, in many ways, an act of either parasitism or cannibalism. One either attaches new writing to a host writing, or one devours the old to create the new. Gregory Ulmer has drawn a parallel between the parasitic and a new form of critique he labels "post-criticism" ("Object of Post-Criticism" 101). Like the Situationists and Burroughs, post-critics adopt a collagist practice of open citation, "a feeding off of the decay of tradition" for invention and argumentation ("Object of Post-Criticism" 106). Ulmer states that in the age of mechanical reproduction, copyright indicates the right to copy ("Object of Post-Criticism" 96). Citation takes over as grammatological principle. Under Burroughs' terms, citation tangles with the parasitic virus. "Word begets image and image is virus" (*Nova Express* 48). Image, in turn, is junk; the junkie a metaphor for an infected culture overdosing on images and consumerism. Burroughs proposes the combination of the anti-viral drug alnorphine and apomorphine to combat the parasitic viruses (*Nova Express* 50). These drugs can be understood, however, as metaphors for the cut-up process itself, the act of reconstructing viral image and text in the way Ulmer's post-critics use collage or the

Situationists practice détournement. The invasion of the host body, Burroughs tells us, is the collagist technique put in practice by the cut-up's own version of textual citation.

## Eating Texts

Allen Ginsberg's naming of Burroughs' second novel, and first major work, considered Burroughs' writings as not parasitic, but cannibalistic. In his 1963 collection *Reality Sandwiches*, Ginsberg writes in the poem "On Burroughs' Work":

> A naked lunch is natural to us,
> We eat reality sandwiches.
> But allegories are so much lettuce.
> Don't hide the madness. (40)

McLuhan makes a similar observation regarding Burroughs' work.

> We have to discover new patterns of action, new strategies of survival. This is where William Burroughs comes in with his *Naked Lunch*. When we invent a new technology, we become cannibals. We eat ourselves alive since these technologies are merely extensions of ourselves. The new environment shaped by electric technology is a cannibalistic one that eats people. To survive one must study the habits of cannibals. ("A Dialogue" 290)

Ginsberg and McLuhan reveal that cool writers become cannibals; they eat (or in more polite terms, borrow) other works. Cool draws upon the metaphoric practice of cannibalism (as initiated by Burroughs) outlined in Greil Marcus' *Dead Elvis*. Marcus sees electronic cannibalism as belonging to a critical practice taken up previously by German photomontage artists. *Dead Elvis'* section "A Corpse in Your Mouth: Adventures of a Metaphor, or Modern Cannibalism" begins with John Heartfield's photocollage "Hurrah, Butter is Everything"- a critique of Nazi propaganda which restructures German war posters to propose Germans eat brass instead of butter. Germans

are asked to "eat the machines" that produce war. Heartfield's "cannibalism" of Nazi media, for Marcus, creates a technologically informed critical practice (*Dead Elvis* 160). As Heartfield did, cool writers cut and paste styles and ideas into their own. Marcus parallels Heartfield's work with the contemporary Elvisburger, a reoccurring, cultural joke that Elvis' body can be eaten in fast food restaurants, a metaphor for how Elvis is cut and pasted into various discursive forms. Marcus' chapter is a series of quotations, a cannibalized piece of writing that declares, "So You've Actually Gotten to Eat the King of Rock ' N' Roll! Which would be the living end in terms of souvenirs, fetishism, psychofandom, the collector's mentality, or even just hero-worship in general" (171). Baudrillard's cool also expresses interest in cannibalism. "This devouring is a social act, a *symbolic* act, that aims to maintain a tissue of bonds with the dead man or the enemy they devour. In any case, they don't just eat anybody, as we know; whoever is eaten is always somebody worthy, it is always a mark of respect to devour somebody since, through this, the devoured even becomes sacred" (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 138). Elvis in 1963 fits strangely into the cannibalistic practices outlined by Marcus. The two movies Elvis made in 1963, *It Happened At the World's Fair* and *Fun in Acapulco* both use the same soundtracks. They cannibalize one another.

The institutional toxicity in cannibalism (understood in the university as plagiarism, a topic which will return in Chapter Four) turns language into madness. Confusion over authorship, history, and signification leads to a breakdown in how syntax forms and writing is constructed. Ginsberg's only letter to Burroughs in the 1963 *Yage*

*Letters* continues the ways the reality sandwich, the "tainted food," comprised of past works and ideas, leads to a new state of mind:

> Self decipher this correspondence thus: the vision of ministering angels my fellow man and woman first wholly glimpsed white the Cuarendero gently crooned human in Ayahuasca trance-state 1960 was prophetic of transfiguration of self consciousness from homeless mind sensation of eternal fright to incarnate body feeling present bliss now actualized 1963. (69)

Ginsberg surveyed his vision of 1963 madness previously in the intro to "Howl," his best known poem on the clash of 1950s individuality with American consumer culture:

> I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked, dragging themselves through the Negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix.(*Howl* 9)

And in his 1963 "Last Night in Calcutta," Ginsberg envisions a mental breakdown, experienced after rummaging among books of the "great authors": Rilke, Shakespeare, and Blake. "If the brain changes matter breathes/fearfully back on man/the great crash of buildings and planets/breaks thru the walls of language," the poem reads, concluding with:

> Leave immortality for another to suffer like a fool,
> not get stuck in the corner of the universe
> sticking morphine in the arm and eating meat. (*Planet News* 54)

The metaphors of drugs and food continue to be connected to the way language is constructed through the power relations that exist between writings. Borrowing past works creates breakdowns in order; it challenges copyright but also mortality. Works doo not die; they continue on. For Ginsberg and Burroughs, language and body merge into

what Fredric Jameson has called the schizophrenic culture postmodernism belongs to. Commutation of signifiers (as in the cut-up) leads Jameson to see contemporary culture as schizophrenic because of its inability to establish direct reference between signifier and signified. "With the breakdown of the signifying chain, therefore, the schizophrenic is reduced to an experience of pure material signifiers, or in other words, a series of pure and unrelated presents in time" (*Postmodernism* 27). Jameson's critique of what I am describing as cannibalism is based on how electronic culture constructs what he refers to as "pop history" through the pastiche of celebrity names, commercial key words, and historical markers. These key words for Ginsberg are Blake and Rilke; for Burroughs they are the names and dates that comprise newspapers or electronic recordings. The schizophrenia brought on by cannibalism offers writers critical gestures and rhetorical strategies conducive to electronic writing. As McLuhan argued, "Schizophrenia may be a necessary consequence of literacy" (*The Gutenberg Galaxy* 32). Rather than support the "sanity" of accepted discourse, the cannibal cuts-up language in an act of subversion and recreates rhetoric by forming new rhetorical bodies, what Victor Vitanza calls "the sub/version of the history of rhetoric." "For us (The Sub/Versive New Sophistic Historians of The Antibody Rhetoric) what is required is to discourse in 'underground sub/versions of history,' which are informed by such scissor-like rhetorical figures as catachreses, ironies, hyperboles, ellipses, metalepses, aporias, parapraxies, parentheses, antinomian amphibolies, or in general 'stylistic infelicities' – all of which destroy the Aristotelian Order of Propriety." ("Critical Sub/Versions of the History of Philosophical Rhetoric" 56)

## Kerouac and Nostalgia

Along with Burroughs, Kerouac's work provides insight into the rhetoric of cool. Beginning with Kerouac's 1963 *Visions of Gerard*, we can isolate the contributions of Kerouac to cool. *Visions of Gerard* differs from the more popular and canonized Kerouac text *On the Road* in its nostalgic look at the brother Gerard who died as a child. Gerard, "a sickly little kid with a rheumatic heart and many other complications" becomes romanticized by the narrative and turned into a quest for authenticity (*Visions of Gerard* 7). Narrated by the reoccurring Kerouac character Jean Duluoz, the novel transforms into a tale of nostalgia; Duluoz searches for the true Gerard through the memories he has maintained since he was three, his age when Gerard passes away. The memories of a three year old, however, can be nothing more than longing for things past. Snapshots of Gerard become focal points for the novel.

> The said porch is the scene of the holy little snapshot here kept, Gerard sitting on the rail with my sister Nin (then 3), holding her hand, smirky-ing in the sun the two of them as some aunt or paternity godfather snaps the shot, the long forgotten snow of human hope paling into browner stains in old photoisms. (*Visions of Gerard* 14-15)

This vision of a snapshot past surfaces in other works by Kerouac as well. In particular, *Visions of Cody* begins with its own snapshot of the lost 1930s.

> This is an old diner like the ones Cody and his father ate in, long ago, with that oldfashioned railroad car ceiling and sliding doors – the board where bread is cut and worn down fine as if with bread dust and a plane; the icebox ("Say I got some nice homefries tonight Cody!") is a huge Brownwood thing with oldfashioned pull-out handles, windows, tile walls, full of lovely pans of eggs, butter pats, piles of bacon – old lunchcarts always have a dish of sliced raw onions ready to go on hamburgs. (*Visions of Cody* 3)

For Kerouac, nostalgia is marked by iconicity. The place markers of the past, diners, hamburgers, railroad cars, become the organizational principles of narrative. Narration revolves less around plot and characters and more around memories and longing. Kerouac's lesson for post war writing is the memory, the lost image we long for and attempt to recapture in a pastiche of the past. The nostalgia of *Gerard* reflects the commercial nostalgia for '60s counterculture that Frank notices in advertising. Advertising's question – "Who owns the '60s" – is answered by consumer emotional responses that state, "we all do." The icons of the '60s distributed within media production remind us of how consumer culture as well as artistic practice still preserves a relationship with the '60s. For Kerouac, the response is the same; only here the '60s is replaced by the '30s.

Kerouac's pastiche of '30s diners as nostalgic markers anticipates the opening of George Lucas' nostalgic *American Graffiti*, a shot of Mel's Drive-In complete with hot rods and car hops prompting viewers' memories in a manner conducive to the film's promotional poster which asks: Where were you in '62? In *Visions of Gerard*, the pastiche covers religion, a romanticized dead brother, and images of New England. In *Visions of Cody*, the old west attracts the focus, the diner culture long absorbed by the highway's fast food stop offs and the mass production of prepackaged foods which can quickly be consumed and disposed of. In Burroughs' work, the past becomes a tool for critique. Burroughs instructs writers to gather up the odds and ends from cultural artifacts and recontextualize them via the cut-up. For Kerouac, the critique is subtle but still present. The diner culture he yearns for (or lost brother) represents the pre-electronic

world of mass consumption. In *Gerard*, Duluoz's father, Emil, works at a printing press in 1920s America, two decades prior to the popularization of television. The press turns into a nostalgic memory of the pre-image information age: "the hand presses, the piles of glossy paper, the paper cutter, the roll-trucks, the inky shadows, rolls, rags, cans, inks, the long sad stained planks of the floor leading to the back entrance which fronts Market Street" (*Visions of Gerard* 99-100). Emil runs off advertising circulars which reflect modest prices, men's and woman's shoes "as low as $2.98" (*Visions of Gerard* 100). Nostalgic writing (the old style printing press run by hand) intersects with an economy selling necessities at reasonable rates, not at maximum profit. Consumer culture has not yet been corrupted by mass media.

What makes *Visions of Gerard* an interesting place to begin discussion on Kerouac and cool is that, instead of focusing on Beat marginality, it establishes Beat fascination with nostalgic yearning as a rhetorical method. Juxtaposed with Kerouac's despondent 1962 *Big Sur*, *Visions of Gerard* presents a sense of regret over what's been lost. In *Big Sur*, Duluoz, the famed Beatnik writer we are supposed to believe is Kerouac, laments how his image has been multiplied into celebrity. The media has ruined Duluoz to the point where he must reject the actual past for a representation of the past. "Anybody wants to call me a beatnik for THIS better try if they dare" (*Big Sur* 32). The response, like in *Gerard*, is to narrate the present through the eyes of nostalgia. Associative-linked memories construct the narrative in a non-linear style. The narrative shifts suddenly from one thought to the next, activated by word choices.

It reminds me of the time I once saw a whole tiptoeing gang of couples sneaking into our back kitchen door on West Street in Lowell the leader telling me to shush as I stand there 9 years old amazed, then all bursting in on my father innocently listening to the Primo Carnera-Ernie Schaaft fight on the old 1930s radio – For a big roaring toot – but Cody's oldfashioned family tiptoe sneak carries that strange apocalyptic burst of gold he somehow always manages to produce, like I said elsewhere the time in Mexico he drove an old car over a rutted road very slowly as we were all high on tea and I saw golden Heaven. (*Big Sur* 124-125)

"Tiptoe" becomes a link, an associative word connecting one memory to the next. Memories construct narrative; they provide the linkages between syntagmatic points. Memories serve as the library of contemporary discourse, what Darren Tofts describes as the "prehistory of cyberculture." Kerouac writes, "The history of everything we've seen together and separately has become a library in itself – The shelves pile higher – They're full of misty documents or documents of the Mist – The mind has convoluted in every tuckaway everwhichaway tuckered hole till there's no more the expressing of our latest thoughts let alone old" (*Big Sur* 140). In *Gerard*, this notion is put into practice in the longing for a pre-electronic pastoral life.

In the ocean there is a Spring, deep and verdurous we cant estimate, so I sing the surface one, the Spring that makes us feel so sad and fair, and morning air brings nostalgic cigarette smoke from holy hopey smokers – When hats are whipped and finally succumb, coats flap and run their stories out, and vests disappear, and shirtsleeves are hoisted of a sudden afternoon April 26 and the ballgame is on. (*Visions of Gerard* 91)

The markers of Spring are all here: ball games beginning, spring dress, windy days. Action is replaced by iconic placement and historical narrative gives way to emotional response.

## History Vs Nostalgia

Kerouac's nostalgia fits in with what Fredric Jameson has referred to as the problems inherent in the reification of historicity. "Historicity is neither a representation of the past nor a representation of the future (although its various forms use such representations): it can first and foremost be defined as a perception of the present as history: that is, as a relationship to the present which somehow defamiliarizes it and allows us that distance from immediacy which we call historical" ("Nostalgia for the Present" 259). This reification builds a new history out of a period's place markers. For Jameson, contemporary culture (which we might interpret him meaning as post World War II culture) has become "irredeemably historicist, in the bad sense of an omnipresent and indiscriminate appetite for dead styles and fashions, indeed for all the styles and fashions of a dead past" ("Nostalgia for the Present" 262). The problem, then, for Jameson lies in the ways nostalgia creates a false sense of history, the way, for example, Kerouac's vision of the 1920s and 1930s ignores economic and political realities, opting instead to depend on "the recombination of various stereotypes of the past" ("Nostalgia for the Present" 272).

The importance of nostalgia to cool, however, does not reflect its lack of historicity. In contrast to Jameson's view of nostalgia as distorting current perceptions, cool uses nostalgia as a rhetorical device. In contemporary usage, nostalgia, as Gladwell shows through his description of the coolhunters, informs cool as style. Kerouac's style uses nostalgic markers to shape narrative. Jameson treats nostalgia's construction of a "pop history" as problematic, as a contributor to the "waning of affect" in contemporary

culture that we often refer to as cool. This coldness is at the center of speculative fiction like Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Sheep*, whose futuristic characters use empathy boxes as "extensions of your body," an indirect reference to McLuhan's effects of cool media on individual sentiment (*Do Androids Dream of Sheep* 57). The implication of Jameson's critique is that the figures of pop culture cannot function as discursive markers because these figures are mere representations of a history which "itself remains forever out of reach" (*Postmodernism* 25). Nostalgia makes history cool, detached.

1963 informs nostalgia at the level of detachment. For instance, Elvis in 1963 becomes a nostalgic moment captured in Warhol's *Double Elvis*. Using an image of the King to mark the Elvis that no longer exists, Warhol's painting features two Elvises, the media icon and the memory from the artist's childhood. "Still foraging in his childhood for images, [Warhol in 1963] went back to his first collection, the movie-star publicity pictures, and did silk-screen paintings of Elvis Presley, Troy Donahue, Warren Beatty, and Natalie Wood" (Bockris 112). The nostalgic duplication of Elvis, though, functions as critique of fetish, for nostalgia involves a fetishization of the past, a displacement of current emotion for a place no longer in existence. Warhol's *Double Elvis* results from the media duplications of Elvis dominant in everyday discourse. The doubling maps out Elvis's dual positions within cultural memory the way Karal Ann Marling maps Elvis the icon through a revisit to his birthplace. Marling's *Graceland: Going Home With Elvis*, a theoretical pilgrimage in which media representation and nostalgia are inseparable, treats Elvis as another marker of the past.

Graceland and the other places Elvis Presley stopped at and lived in and marveled over along the way all bear the marks of living, the scars of hard use. Memories cling to them, even when the memories are Elvis's, and he is dead. But we still live here, in these same places. (Marling 4)

Marling's nostalgic travel to Elvis' home is Kerouac's nostalgic wandering throughout America as novelist. In *On the Road*, Kerouac's Sal Paradise travels west in a nostalgic attempt to recreate the heroism of Western Expansion, to find again the lost diners of Dean Moriarty's father's youth, to rejoin the hoboes of the Great Depression. The narrative is a nostalgic construction. As one character tells Paradise:

"During the depression," said the cowboy to me. "I used to hop freights at least once a month. In those days you'd see hundreds of men riding a flatcar or in a boxcar, and they weren't just bums, they were all kinds of men out of work and going from one place to another and some of them just wandering. It was like that all over the West. Brakemen never bothered you in those days. I don't know about today." (*On the Road* 19)

In *The Subterraneans*, the nostalgia emerges in Leo's sexual relationship with the African-American woman Mardou.

Concern for her father, because I'd been out there and sat down on the ground and seen the rail the steel of America covering the ground filled with the bones of old Indians and Original Americans. (20)

This is where the markers of nostalgia and African-American culture juxtapose, where the concerns of Baraka overlap with Kerouac's prose. Leo's fascination with Mardou is based on a nostalgic (albeit racist) notion of how African-Americans once behaved (and as implied, should behave) in a white society. Leo's nostalgia reinforces a dominant, oppressive discourse associated with the rhetoric of slavery and later Jim Crow. "At first I had doubts because she was Negro," Leo states (*The Subterraneans* 43).

Doubts, therefore, of, well, Mardou's Negro, naturally not only my mother but my sister whom I may have to live with some day and her husband a Southerner and everybody concerned, would be mortified to hell and have nothing to do with us – like it would preclude completely the possibility of living in the South, like in that Faulknerian pillar homestead in the Old Granddad moonlight I'd so long envisioned for myself. (*The Subterraneans* 45)

Leo identifies Mardou's race with a Southern history embedded with the cultural markers of what sounds like the Confederacy. Yet that history appears nostalgic, a longing for the "old homestead," which, for all practical purposes, appears as a euphemism for plantation. Such racial identifications in art prompted Baraka to question their purposes, to suggest that closer analysis will reveal hidden ideological agendas that exist even among the supposedly liberal thinkers of Bohemian culture, to whom Kerouac has been aligned as a cultural icon, and of which Baraka himself identified with shortly as one of the only African-American members of the Beats.

It was a lateral and reciprocal identification the young white American intellectual, artist, and Bohemian of the forties and fifties made with the Negro, attempting, with varying degrees of success, to reap some emotional benefit from the similarity of their positions in American society. In many aspects, this attempt was made even more natural and informal because the Negro music of the forties and again of the sixties (though there has been an unfailing general identification through both decades) was among the most expressive art to come out of America. (*Blues People* 231)

Thus, we get Sal Paradise wandering the streets of Denver, "wishing I were a Negro" (*On the Road* 148). Paradise's romanticized ideal of African-Americans is the nostalgic racism Baraka finds in white culture, the fascination with a so-called folk-music (minstrel shows, playing spoons) that bebop and cool jazz reacted against. "[In the 1940s] young musicians began to think of themselves as serious musicians, even artists, and not

performers. And that attitude erased immediately the protective and parochial atmosphere of the 'folk expression' from jazz" (*Blues People* 188).

However, Paradise's nostalgia viewed in juxtaposition with the 1963 artistic output of African-American artist Romare Bearden de-emphasizes its racism and foregrounds nostalgia as rhetorical move. Racism gives way to an alternative practice of cultural analysis. Bearden's 1963 conception of his "Prevalence of Ritual Series" marks a place where collage and nostalgia correspond. In these works, Bearden, the one-time Realist painter, "had come back to the subject matter he started out with – Black American life as he remembered it in the South of his childhood in North Carolina, and in the North of his coming of age in Pittsburgh and Harlem and later in life the Caribbean island of St. Martin" (Conwill 8). For Bearden, the rituals of religion and popular culture provided iconic markers of African-American practices, practices which could be nostalgically represented within collage. Notably, Bearden's nostalgia for 1920s and 1930s black culture drew inspiration from the Civil Rights movement of 1963, particularly Martin Luther King's March on Washington and "I Have a Dream" speech. Works like *Cotton*, *The Dove*, and *Jazz* are cut and pasted displays of an African-American presence that no longer exists; the nostalgia for the past (and all of its racial struggles) contrasts with the fight against contemporary, institutionalized racism and the struggle to join the developing information driven economy. The creation of collages of the old south, the Cotton Club, and inner city poverty of the 1920s and 30s in the middle of the civil rights movement appears out of place. And yet, this sense of incompatibility is part of the rhetoric of cool. Nostalgia always feels contrary to the demands of the

present. The appropriation of cultural markers to reflect this feeling is Bearden's contribution (as well as Kerouac's) to cool. Bearden's nostalgia reflects music critic Greg Tate's notion that "the black reverence for the past is a reverence for a paradise lost" ("Black to the Future" 767). *The Dove* (1964), for instance, pastes an assortment of cut up African-Americans over a Harlem stoop. They seem to be nowhere, yet everywhere at once. The markers of African-American coolness are present: cigarettes dangling out of empty spaces, masked faces, solitary hands leaning idly out of windows. The portrait resembles Warren Miller's depressed and hopeless Harlem in *The Cool World.*

> Sometimes back home when I was back home in Harlem I laid there on the beat up sofa with the chitterin springs and I uset to think about who am I. But I give it up. It dont get you know where. (Miller 10)

Bearden's paintings are instructions for the rhetoric of cool. While they do not reflect the detached consumerism of Pop Art, they do emphasize the roles of nostalgia and iconic representation and how these areas inform cool as detached experience. Juxtaposed with Kerouac's writings, they also grant a place to think further about the position of African-American cultural production in 1963 literature, especially in noir.

### Noir

Literature's return to the detective novel in the 1950s and 1960s marks another moment of cool. As mentioned, McLuhan understood the detective novel's form as cool because of the ways it forced high reader interaction (the desire to figure out who done it). In their 1964 study of media and pedagogy, Hall and Whannel felt that detective fiction embraces "the transcending of authority and accepted moral codes," an ingredient of current understandings of cool (as I showed in Chapter One in the discussion of the

Clothestime ads). The detective novel of the '50s and '60s belongs to the genre of noir. Noir is the "spare, pull-no-punches-fantasies of city-dwelling masculinity and moxie" often referred to as hardboiled fiction (Muller 68). Noir is what Mike Davis calls "American 'tough-guy' realism" (Davis 18). Noir also marks a place of nostalgia. The restoration of detective fiction after World War II looked to the genre's predecessors of the '30s and '40s (Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and James M. Cain) whose hardboiled protagonists operated by a cool aesthetic of indifference. This aesthetic is captured in the conclusion of John Huston's filmic adaptation of *The Maltese Falcon.* Sam Spade betrays his *femme fatale*, Mia O' Shaughnessy, by leaving her to the police. Spade makes his decent in an apartment building elevator; the doors close, and Spade's eyes reveal a cold, disconnected state of mind. He stares directly ahead, refusing eye contact with the woman he has turned in. He becomes cool, detached, indifferent. Such actions Raymond Chandler described as the guiding force for the genre's popularity, "If the mystery novel is at all realistic (which it very seldom is) it is written in a certain spirit of detachment; otherwise nobody but a psychopath would want to write or read it" (Chandler 2). The "cool spirit of detachment" that Chandler read into his own and other writers' work marks the importance of noir to a rhetoric of cool (Chandler 20).

Jim Thompson's 1963 *The Grifters* introduces noir into the 1963 collage. In Thompson's novel, conman Roy Dillon emphasizes the detached nature of the cool noir protagonist. Removed from both social and personal demands, Dillon's hustling reflects his cold personality.

> He had no time for women. Nothing but the casual come-and-go contacts which any young man might have. It was not until late in his third year [in L.A.] that he had started looking around for a particular kind of woman. Someone who was not only highly desirable, but who could be willing to – even prefer to – accept the only kind of arrangement which he was willing to offer. (*The Grifters* 26)

Dillon is detached from public and economic concerns (he cons for a living and thus is removed from the demands of formal capitalism) as well as from a normal social life (his limited contact with his mother Lilly and women in general). Dillon's loner status belongs to what Eddie Muller sees as the main trait of noir's investment in post-war alienation; he is the by-product of electronic culture, alienated by mass production and mass media's force. Dillon is one of many "loners on a quest, small men in a sprawling landscape seeking private vindication in the wilderness, telling their tales in rugged New World vernacular" (Muller 70). Dillon's character, like most noir characters, stresses emotionless reactions. He cons and thinks nothing of the consequences, masking any reaction that might occur.

> When his four dupes thought about him later, it would be as a "helluva nice guy," so amiably troubled by his unwanted and unintended winnings as to make shameful any troubled thought of their own. When Roy thought about them later – but he would not. (*The Grifters* 131)

Noir teaches the importance of affect to cool. The fear of a cold society unconcerned with how emotions direct discourse becomes the basis for noir's narrative structure. From the way characters talk, the "brisk, staccato manner and delivery" (Muller 72) to the dark "self-destructive psyche of the private eye" (Muller 76), noir's style designates cool as a lack of emotional investment. Noir underscores Peter Stearns' notion of an American Cool, a twentieth century attitude dictated by affect as well as the

numbing down of culture McLuhan describes. Noir challenges the mantra of Thomas Pynchon's Benny Profane, the main character of his 1963 novel *V*, "Keep cool, keep cool, but care. It's a watchword" by eliminating the "care" portion (Pynchon 345). By *The Grifters'* conclusion, complete coolness has taken over and left the characters indifferent and careless. Dillon's mother Lilly accidentally causes a sheet of glass to cut his throat. Realizing what she has done, she shrugs it off as inconsequential.

> She laughed, gave the thing on the floor an almost jeering glance.
> *"Well kid, it's only one throat, huh?"*
> And then she went out of the room and the hotel, and out in the City of Angels. (*The Grifters* 189)

An almost exact repetition of the ending of John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon*, the noir ending provides cool with a rhetorical figure – the cold shoulder, the apathetic feeling the Greeks termed *ataraxy*. To avoid stress and anxiety in tense situations, the Greek Epicureans preached ataraxy: show no care. In turn, this subtle gesture indicates a larger contribution to contemporary cyberfiction. The protagonists of Thompson's novels – William Collins in *After Dark, My Sweet*, Frank Dillon in *Hell of A Woman*, Lou Ford in *Killer Inside Me*, and Ken Lacey in *Pop 1280* - are the models for the cool culture of cyberspace. They contribute to the cool attributes of current figures of cyberfiction where individualism is romanticized and emotions are downplayed. In particular, the novels of Philip K. Dick and William Gibson stress this point. In Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep,* bounty hunter Rick Deckard uses affect as a device for detecting renegade androids. In a futuristic society where even humans must stimulate emotions from mood organs, Deckard uses an emotion measuring test called the Voigt-Kampff to

determine whether a body is human or robot. The Voigt-Kampff looks for "the so-called 'shame' or 'blushing' reaction to a morally shocking stimulus" (*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* 40). Meanwhile, humans tap into empathy boxes for spiritual contact with a godlike figure named Mercer. Similarly, Gibson's cyber-cowboys, like Case in *Neuromancer*, are hired out as detached beings roaming the matrix (cyberspace). Cyberspace encourages physical and emotional detachment, what Darren Tofts describes as "the state of incorporeality, of disembodied immersion in a 'space' that has no co-ordinates in actual space" (*Memory Trade* 15). Cyberspace participants' bodies remain behind while their minds search for who they've been hired to capture. "[Case] operated on an almost permanent adrenaline high, a byproduct of youth and proficiency, jacked into a custom cyberspace deck that projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix" (*Neuromancer* 5). The detachment leaves them cool, at times, unemotional, products of the cyberage.

Cyberfiction, noir, and African-American culture juxtapose via cool. In *The Grifters* (as well as with cyber characters like Dick's Deckard), Dillon's detachment echoes Baraka's detached African-American experience as well as the cool pose outlined by Majors and Billson. Dillon puts on a mask, pretending to be a salesman when he in fact brings in money from the con games called the twenties and the tat. And like the mask of the cool pose, the grift provides Dillon with a survival mechanism. Dillon's usage of the con functions as a reaction against post war capitalism. Loners like Dillon have no means of entry into consumer capitalism. They are not producers, and without steady income, they cannot become consumers. The only choice remaining is theft. Theft

has both financial and metaphoric purposes. In Burroughs' work, theft undermines corporate language and media control. In *The Grifters*, theft is a street rhetoric, a public protest of an economic prosperity that doesn't extend to all. Dillon's response to American consumerism in the post war era generates its own resistance strategy of non-involvement, a strategy that re-establishes Baraka's definition of cool. The parallels Baraka's cool outcast shut out from society not by choice but by racist ideology. This distinctive cool role persists in African-American literature, exemplified by the figures of Gwendolyn Brooks' poem "We Real Cool," (published in the 1963 collection *Selected Poems*). Brooks' cool, indifferent, emotional state indicates another place where African-American culture and noir juxtapose.

> The Pool Players.
> Seven at the Golden Shovel.
>
> We real cool. We
> Left school. We
>
> Lurk late. We
> Strike straight. We
>
> Sing gin. We
> Thin gin. We
>
> Jazz June. We
> Die soon. (Brooks 73)

Despair dictates style. Delivering staccato lines spoken like a character in one of Thompson's novels, the poem feels as stylistically detached as its content suggests. Like the nameless personas of Brooks' poem, Dillon, as with many of Thompson's characters, does die "too soon," killed by his mother Lilly in a struggle over stolen money. And

similar to Brooks' poem, noir narratives often place characters like Dillon in the cool locale: pool halls or bars. Often, these places become icons, cultural markers of set feelings. The markers of Bearden's collages are the inner city stoop, the southern farm, or the jazz musician. Brooks' marker also is the inner city. Thompson's markers come from L.A. His narrative "reaches down into the spiritual and ethical morass beneath the surface setting of the plush hotels, cocktail-bars, and Cadillacs of the City of Angels" (Payne 55). Noir's lesson for cool, at this level, is the situation of place and emotion.

### Noir means Black

Similar to Marlene Connor's description of cool as the language of street culture, noir treats place as central to cool's impact.

> A man's ability to defend himself is at the very core of cool. It must be understood immediately in the streets, otherwise he will spend his every waking moment proving his ability. Conveying this ability becomes a combination of appearance and attitude; thus the symbols of cool. (Connor 26)

Street ethos shapes two prominent locales for noir: Los Angles (where *The Grifters* takes place) and New York, particularly Harlem (where Chester Himes' fiction occurs). Thompson's L.A. represents what Mike Davis describes as the "insinuated contempt for a depraved businesses culture while [noir] simultaneously searched for a critical mode of writing or filmmaking within [the city]" (Davis 21). Detective writer Chester Himes' Harlem, on the other hand, draws upon the emotions of the neglected American lower class and racially ostracized African-American community to incite critique. Himes' Harlem, what he calls "'The Valley,' that flat lowland of Harlem east of Seventh Avenue" (*The Heat's On* 30) extends to Lenox Avenue and the blocks stretching from

128$^{th}$ to 135$^{th}$ Street. This locale, which is also the backdrop of Himes' 1962 *Pinktoes*, provides the mood for the hardened, African-American detectives Grave Digger Jones and Coffin Ed Johnson. In Himes' work, the cool street mirrors the hardboiled detective attitude. One of Himes' white police sergeants describes it accordingly:

> "You've got to be tough to be a colored cop in Harlem. Unfortunately, colored people don't respect colored cops unless they're tough." (*Real Cool Killers* 41)

Himes' vision of a Harlem cut off from the political and economic prosperity of white America belongs with Ralph Ellison's description in his 1964 collection of essays *Shadow and Act*:

> To live in Harlem is to dwell in the very bowels of the city; it is to pass a labyrinthine existence among streets that explode monotonously skyward with the spires and crosses of churches and clutter under foot with garbage and decay. . .Overcrowded and exploited politically and economically, Harlem is the scene and symbol of the Negro's perpetual alienation in the land of his birth. (295-296)

Unlike L.A., which noir treats as spectacle void of substance, Himes' Harlem places more importance on feeling than appearance. Described in his series of detective novels (*A Rage in Harlem*, *The Real Cool Killers*, *The Heat's On*, *The Crazy Kill*, *All Shot Up*, *Cotton Comes to Harlem*, and *Blind Man With A Pistol*), Himes' Harlem employs brutality and street violence as rhetorical device. Repeated violence in these texts reveals an inherent complexity to racial discrimination. Grave Digger and Coffin Ed's indiscriminate beatings of suspects or public murder of criminals highlight a racism not only within white society but within African-American culture as well. In a confrontation with the Real Cool Moslem gang

> Coffin Ed halted, his pistol ready to shatter the Arab's teeth, and shook his head like a dog coming out of water. Releasing the Arab's neck, he backed up one step and said in his grating voice: "One for the money. . .and two for the show. . ."(The Real Cool Killers 16)

Inner city shootings and beatings create larger questions regarding racism. Internal alienation clashes with externally applied alienation to alter the affect we call cool. Often, Himes' rhetoric does so by juxtaposing African-American minority voice (Grave Digger and Coffin Ed) and mainstream media (the newspaper). In the end of *The Real Cool Killers*, for example, a newspaper headline reports Grave Digger and Coffin Ed's resolution of Ulysses Galen's murder. But the crime's conclusion is, in fact, fleeting, overshadowed by the threat of more violence if institutionalized hatred isn't dealt with promptly.

> Uptown in Harlem, the sun was shinning on the same drab scene it illuminated every other morning at eleven o'clock. No one missed the few expendable colored people being held on various charges in the big new granite skyscraper jail on Centre Street that had replaced the old New York City tombs. (*The Real Cool Killers* 148)

While media report what has gone wrong within society, the social, political, and economic reasons for how such violence occurs are never addressed. Responsibility for making these points clear lies with the African-American community. In *The Heat's On*, Grave Digger responds to his suspension for killing a white drug dealer in such a manner: "'It's all right to kill a few colored people for trying to get their children an education, but don't hurt a mother-raping white punk for selling dope'" (73). Relating news reporting with inner city strife reflects Gordon Parks' 1963 photograph *Malcolm X, Harlem*. Parks' photo exhibits the civil rights leader holding up a newspaper declaring "Seven Unarmed

Negroes Shot in Cold Blood by Los Angles Police." Cold deaths create a cold, detached reaction. Harlem turns cool, but the nation that appreciates, even in subtle ways, George Wallace's infamous 1963 declaration, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever," feels cool to violence as well. After a vicious slaying, all that remains is the newspaper headline and a reproduced picture, the products of corporate America's publishing industry. The deaths are as cool as Warhol's commodification of daily life, for they, in fact, become commodified, sold as mementos of how African-American culture is expected to behave. Nevertheless, in the Parks' photo, Malcolm X holds up police brutality in a cool act of defiance. His defiance is directed at a mainstream culture which allows its emotions to be as detached from African-American suffering as the newspaper image detaches itself from the actual act that has occurred.

Parks' photo is a reminder of Gwendolyn Brooks' 1963 "Negro Hero": "But let us speak only of my success and the pictures in the Caucasian dailies" (Brooks 19). In 1963, print media, for the most part, belongs to a dominant discourse that is mostly white. Even within those boundaries, however, work like Leonard Freed's 1963 photograph *New York City* alters the ways that dominant discourse becomes subverted. In Freed's photograph, an African-American man also holds up a newspaper; the headline reads, "We Must Have Justice." Behind him, New York's commercial district comes alive with billboards advertising soda fountains and hot dogs. Around him, people make their way in and out of shops. The demand for justice ties racism to economics. The insertion of one African-American man in a crowd of white shoppers attempts to make clear these connections. The task, though, defies simplicity. Like Charles Mingus' "Freedom," a track not

included on his 1963 record *Mingus, Mingus, Mingus* but later added to subsequent printings, African-American representations in the arts sustain a continued discourse of social justice that often yields to frustration.

> Freedom for your daddy
> Freedom for your mamma
> Freedom for your brothers and sisters
> But no freedom for me. (Mingus)

Mingus' recording, like Parks' photograph, exhibits a disenchantment with the NAACP's slogan "Free by '63," whose purpose was to mark "the Centennial celebration of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation" (Booker 29). Such frustrations can be dealt with through the technology of mass production, like photography. Leonard Freed's series of 1963 Harlem photographs alleviates the types of frustrations dominant in Himes' Harlem by appealing to emotion. *Harlem Street Party*, *Muscle Boys*, and *Fire Hydrant* are all snapshots of daily life in the inner city that divert attention away from communal suffering. The rhetorical affect of these images is emotional empowerment. In various essays, Roland Barthes describes the rhetoric of images as consisting of three levels.[9] The levels acquire various names in his essays, but for the most part they consist of the denotative meaning (what the image signifies--like a house or a child), the connotative meaning (what meanings we bring to the image because of cultural codes we are familiar with), and something beyond these two meanings (what Barthes calls *jouissance* or elsewhere the third meaning). In *Camera Lucida*, this last level becomes

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[9] In "Rhetoric of the Image," he calls them the linguistic image, the pure image, and the message without a code (34-36). In "The Third Meaning," they are the informational, symbolic, and third meanings.

the punctum, the elusive meaning which disturbs the other two. The punctum creates "a certain shock" that is based on an emotional response (*Camera Lucida* 41). Barthes provides a 1963 Richard Avedon photograph, *William Casby, Born a Slave*, as an example of reading the punctum in the image. This image juxtaposes with my own inclusions of Parks and Freed's work.

Even though Barthes' punctum depends on personalized readings of images, Parks' and Freed's photographs, I contend, evoke such an emotional response when placed within the 1963 collage. The effect of an African-American man holding up a newspaper demanding justice in a crowded shopping area conveys a sense of personal shock that can't be easily named. When we juxtapose the feeling of the photographs with Himes' work, we get cool, the detached feeling that still commands some degree of emotional participation. The teenage boys flexing muscles in *Muscle Boys* or the kids opening the fire hydrant in *Fire Hydrant* have descriptive and cultural meanings. But the punctum, the cool, elusive meaning, suggests an alternative feeling, one that advocates elusiveness. The punctum is analogous to the detective genre in general. Something in the photograph remains evasive, like the undiscovered heroin in Himes' *The Heat's On* or the capture of Ulysses Galens' real killer in *The Real Cool Killers*. That elusiveness, like the rays of water breaking out of a fire hydrant in Freed's photograph, is defiance. Barthes states that the creation of emotion by the photograph "obeys a principle of defiance" because it goes against what a photographer set out to capture (*Camera Lucida* 33). Similarly, these photos contribute to cool as resistance. These images expose other ways for achieving justice: strength and defiance (posing strength, busting open a fire hydrant).

This version of Harlem in 1963 differs from Jim Thompson's treatment of African-American culture, which downplays defiance. In Thompson's 1964 *Pop 1280*, southern racism outlines African-American experience as politically detached. The cool African-American offers the model of conciliation and appeasement as a scheme for dealing with conflict. An early exchange between the novel's narrator sheriff Nick Corey and fellow sheriff Ken Lacey reveals 1950s problematic understandings of black culture. Lacey tells Corey[10]:

> "Y'see, it's this way, Nick. Niggers ain't got no souls because they ain't really people"
> "They ain't?" I said.
> "Why, o'course not. Most everybody knows that."
> "But if they ain't people, what are they?"
> "Niggers, just niggers, that's all. That's why folks refer to 'em as niggers instead of people." (*Pop 1280* 25)

The characters' contemptuous attitude returns during Corey's killing spree. When local African-American Uncle John stumbles upon one of Corey's murder victims, Nick explains why he must kill him. Once again, social and political detachment are the rhetorical responses.

> "You can't help bein' what you are, jus' a pore ol' black man. That's what you say, Uncle John, and do you know what I say? I say screw you. I say you can't help being what you are, and I can't help being what I am and have to be. You goddam well know you've got no friends among the whites. You goddam well ought to know that you're not going to have any because you stink Uncle John., and you go around begging to get screwed and how the hell can anyone have a friend like that? (*Pop 1280* )

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[10] The novel takes place something prior to World War I, but its small town mentality, southern locale, and racism indicate the feeling of civil unrest in the 1950s.

Uncle John's mannerisms and reaction insinuate an, at least, partial agreement with Corey. Uncle John allows himself to be shot; he offers no opposition. Uncle John's inability to resist translates as an impotence Baraka understood as cool. The rhetoric of *Pop 1280's* residents echoes James Baldwin's vision of a divided America in his 1963 *The Fire Next Time*:

> Negroes in this country – and Negroes do not, strictly or legally speaking, exist in any other – are taught really to despise themselves from the moment their eyes open on the world. This world is white and they are black. White people hold the power, which means that they are superior to blacks (intrinsically, that is: God decreed it so), and the world has innumerable ways of making this difference known and felt and feared.(Baldwin 25)

Baldwin's position surfaces in 1963 African-American fiction like Richard Wright's *Lawd Today*, where the cool detachment white racism creates in Thompson's work manifests in African-American attitudes as well. Wright's main character Jake discusses the time period's racial problems with the elder Doc and concludes that passivity remains a better answer to civil unrest than political action.

> [Doc:] "If they kept their daman mouths shut and tried to get hold of something, some money, or property, then they'd get somewhere."
> [Jake:] "Aw, them niggers ought to be taken out and shot." (Wright 57)

The rhetoric of Wright's characters bears little resemblance to Martin Luther King's impassioned 1963 plea for racial unity, "Letter From Birmingham Jail." Instead, King's cool response belongs with Himes, Parks, and Leonard. King's southern imprisonment in 1963, and the essay which reflects his feelings, offers another position on resistance. Even though King's plan to end segregation entailed non-violent action, his methods of protest involved resistance over passivity. Non-violence did not embrace cool

as non-action. Instead, it recognized the need for alternative resistance practices ranging from the intensive language construction of King's speeches to the creation of tension and shock (another version of what Burroughs aimed to achieve through his cut-ups) through public display. King wrote, "The purpose of our direct-action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation" (King 767). In 1963, King arrived in the South with the intention to put into action "Project C," the "code name for a proposed series of racial demonstrations" (Bennett 4). The "C" in King's project stood for "confrontation." Juxtaposed in my 1963 collage, it can also be composition (or composition as confrontation) since King's writings on civil disobedience have become as important as his marches. In this regard, former Atlanta mayor and United Nations ambassador Andrew Young labels King cool.

> Martin [Luther King] was very cool. Cool is ultimately the symbol of strength, a vehicle for self-esteem, a means of survival, and a mechanism for dealing with an irrational situation. Then [King's] cool, and the cool of the civil rights movement, and finally southern cool becomes the process of unifying communities and people, and gaining power through this unification. (qtd Connor 100)

King's directive for gaining political power necessitated extremism. "The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be" (King 773). The literary tactics of Burroughs or the political responses of Adbusters might also be seen as extremist. In this way, the photography juxtaposed into this part of my collage offers image as extremism, as defiance. Instead of tearing apart images and recontextualizing them, extremism in 1963 Harlem demands photographic intervention. The result of that intervention, though, is emotion, and in particular, cool. Himes'

detective fiction extends this definition of cool by shifting attention from the language of the image to textual language construction.

## The Signifyin(g) Detective

Baldwin and Wright indicate the prevalence of cool among African-American culture in the late '50s and early '60s as an oppressive force applied externally and internally. Their texts echo the white antagonist of Chester Himes' *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, who threatens the novel's main character Bob Jones by yelling, "I'll cool the nigger" (33). Cool puts down, keeps people in their place, forces them to remain stagnant and non-participatory. Whereas detective fiction normally creates the feeling of interaction by way of the narrative's fragmented events that must be reconstructed by the reader, Himes' work intensifies reader interaction through its complex distortion of language. Through word games and puns, Himes' detective novels attempt to redirect cool as more than passive response to social action, what Gary Storhoff calls Himes' ability to "'shake' up the reader, to expose and then radicalize the social and political ideologies concealed by the detective form" (Storhoff 46). This element of shock found in Himes' fiction adds to cool's interest in disturbing political and ideological positions as previously outlined in Burroughs and Kerouac's writings, and even in King's extremism. The bulk of Himes' resistance strategy comes from the African-American tradition of signifyin(g). Himes' narratives often weave complex word games to demonstrate character confrontation. But these games also are meant to provoke the reader to become aware of civil rights issues. Henry Louis Gates distinguishes between signifying and

signifyin(g), by marking the latter as an African-American rhetoric of pastiche and repetitive styles in which parody becomes resistance.

> The black rhetorical tropes subsumed under signifying would include marking," "loud-talking," "specifying," "testifying," "calling out" (of one's name), "sounding," "rapping" and "playing the dozens." ("The Blackness of Blackness" 286)

Himes' 1962 *Pinktoes* utilizes language games in such a manner. Confusion over meaning dominates this narrative about interracial relations. Himes' destruction of language parallels his desire to break down racial distinction. "Who is a Negro," the novel's absent narrator asks (*Pinktoes* 20). The answer comes by why of a faith in identity-formation Himes classifies as "not only historical but also hysterical" (*Pinktoes* 25). Like other temporal novels of '62/63, *Pinktoes* approaches cool as an inability to respond to oppression unless it is done through hysterics, often at the level of language construction.

> "All Negroes should stay mad," a white lady commended him. "The way you are treated."
> "That wouldn't help," a white man contradicted. "Cool heads are needed to solve this problem."
> "You've been cool long enough," a flushed white lady said to Julius in so pointed a manner he felt called upon to defend himself."
> "I'm not cool -" he began, truthfully enough, but another white lady cut him off:
> "Negroes must always keep a hard - " (*Pinktoes* 40-41)

The unfinished prescription to the African-American character Julius might be completed as "attitude" (be stoic – don't respond), "line" (maintain dignity through quiet), or "on" (exemplify your sexuality). Either way, a response is warranted. For Himes, that response arrives via language. Language possess the power to recontextualize racism, to turn, for example, the image of the African-American male as

oversexed (as in Mailer's description) into a game between two women debating "colored hams," a metaphor for interracial sexual relationships. In this passage, food hides the deeper sexual innuendo:

> Mrs. Kissock grimaced. "I detest ham," she said vehemently. "I can't bear to eat it. It has such a strong flavor and the meat is dark, some of it positively black."
> "Your husband certainly won't agree with you," Mamie said maliciously. "That's what he likes. Strong-flavored black meat. If you had black hams yourself, he would love nothing better than to bury himself in them" (*Pinktoes* 210).

The out of place dialogue reveals Storhoff's claim that "Himes' tests leave readers on their own to devise meanings – none of which seems entirely adequate to the narrative" (Storhoff 50). If the meaning seems inadequate, it is because language has become a defensive discursive method meant to not only allow characters the ability to fight amongst one another, but to allow the narrative to fight an oppressive reading. Signifyin(g) empowers the narrative against dominant meanings. As Robert Stepto claims, it disturbs so that the "reader gets 'told' – or 'told off' – in such a way that he or she finally begins to hear" (Stepto 309). In this way, Ralph Ellison tells off Amiri Baraka in an often cited quotation from Ellison's 1964 review of *Blues People*, "The tremendous burden of sociology which Jones [Baraka's original name] would place upon this body of music is enough to give even the blues the blues" (Ellison 249). Ellison's repetition of "blues" signifies on the subject matter of Baraka's text by invoking the pun whose dual meanings allow for this type of subtle critique. These techniques are taken up by Himes in *The Real Cool Killers* as well, in which noir teaches the power of signifyin(g) as rhetorical stance, what Gates refers to as "the obscuring of apparent meaning" ("The

Signifying Monkey and the Language of Signifying" 1200). Himes' signifyin(g) treats language as, what Russell Potter calls, "homonymic connections that serve either to undermine, parody, or connect in a surprising way the underlying connotations of language." A political act, signifyin(g) challenges power relations through its shock techniques, creating an "incursion against stability, uniformity, and homogeneity" (Potter 82).

In *The Real Cool Killers*, signifyin(g) allows the Real Cool Moslem gang to resist the interrogation of white policemen searching for Ulysses Galen's killer through the only means available, language. As the police question the group, standard English quickly transforms into an Uncle Tom "yes suh" "naw suh" series of responses, the only way to appease an authority uninterested in the truth of who killed the white salesman Galen. The police only want a black arrested. Signifyin(g) avoids giving into police interrogation by turning the questions back on the interrogators.

> "What do they call you, Mo-hammed or Nasser?" the sergeant hammered.
> "They call me by my name, Samson."
> "Samson what?"
> "Samson Hyers."
> "Don't give me that crap; we know you're one of those Moslems."
> "I ain't no Moslem; I'm a cannibal."
> "Oh, so you think you're a comedian."
> "You're the one asking the funny questions." (*The Real Cool Killers* 70)

Sean McCann argues that Himes' language games are "a way of adapting to, rather than challenging, a racist society – a measure of the 'absolute impotence' that [his characters] bridle at in [their] own experience" (271). The placement of Himes' narratives in the category of adaptation, though, contrasts with cool and instead belongs to Gordon

Green's 1963 critique of African-American dialect, a forerunner of the 1980s academic controversy regarding the teaching of Ebonics. Like McCann, Green described African-American dialect as a demonstration of the black community's powerlessness in the face of adversity. Green contended that economic and political gains would remain absent until African-American culture adopted standard English.

> All that remains, if the colored man comes from a segregated Negro community, is a difference in speech. For the white man listening to the exotic sounds of a dialect, it suggests that a colored man comes from a very different and inferior background from his own and that the speech belongs to that of a minority group. (Green 82)

In other words, cultural assimilation at the level of language should be the main priority of African-Americans. But as the rhetoric of cool teaches, the power of language in cool exists in its distinctive nature (non-adaptive) and especially in its resistance to cultural norms. Cool, therefore, does not ask that black dialect and slang be dismissed from scholastic curriculums or from artistic practice, but that they be included as informants of an alternative rhetorical practice to which they belong. At this level, the lesson for the next chapter includes maintaining a difference from the dominant discursive order via language. The language of film and music as contributors to the rhetoric of cool will be Chapter Three's focus.

CHAPTER THREE
FILM AND MUSIC

Electric simultaneity ends specialist learning and activity, and demands interrelation in depth, even of the
personality – Marshall McLuhan *Understanding Media*

"Flash is fast, Flash is cool" – Blondie "Rapture"

"I'm cool like dat" –Butterfly, Digable Planets "Cool Like Dat"

In a 1963 interview with the French film journal *Cahier du Cinema*, Roland
Barthes commented on the role of juxtapositional strategies, like montage, in film.

> The strength of the signifier [in montage] does not come from its clarity
> but from the fact that it is perceived as a signifier – I would say: whatever
> the resultant meaning may be, it is not things but the place of things which
> matters. ("On Film" 16)

Barthes introduces the filmic practice of montage into my collage. Like collage, montage
involves the juxtaposition of unlike items. Whereas collage typically incorporates
previously found materials in ways that leave the various items distinct, montage, often
associated with film, results from the editing and joining of images to form a new single
picture or text. Barthes confirms my own placement "of things": the juxtaposition of the
various meanings of cool. In my 1963 collage, Barthes' interview juxtaposes with
Marshall McLuhan. In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan examines film as one of many
media formations affecting social change. In particular, McLuhan connects film to the
history of writing and technology. "The business of the writer or the film-maker  is to
transfer the reader or viewer from one world, his own, to another, the world created by
typography and film. That is so obvious, and happens so completely, that those

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undergoing the experience accept it subliminally and without critical awareness" (*Understanding Media* 249). McLuhan felt that filmic writing suffers within Western, typographic culture because audience expectations of linear narrative encourages filmmakers to make films that are, in essence, typographic print texts. He contended that the power of montage implicit in the filmic medium does not attract productive applications outside of simple editing procedure made to create a seamless product. For McLuhan, electronic culture would better itself by studying the techniques of filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein, who utilized the montage effect as a juxtapositional practice intended to shock audiences into new critical awareness.

> To [Sergei] Eisenstein, the overwhelming fact of film was that is an "act of juxtaposition." But to a culture in an extreme reach of typographic conditioning, the juxtaposition must be one of uniform and connected characters and qualities. There must be no leaps from the unique space of the tea kettle to the unique space of the kitten or the boot. If such objects appear, they must be leveled off by some continuous narrative, or be "contained" in some uniform pictorial space. (*Understanding Media* 253)

These "leaps" in space create provocative associations. They are, however, difficult for print culture to understand because of their non-linearity and lack of syntagmatic syntax. In opposition to typographic film, McLuhan's ideal filmmakers are what Burroughs called the Technicians, the new media writers who confront narrative formulas with associative logic. "Our technicians learn to read newspapers and magazines for juxtaposition statements rather than alleged content," Burroughs wrote. "We express these statements in Juxtaposition Formulae" (*Nova Express* 85). The Juxtaposition Formulae Burroughs' Technicians create is brought up indirectly by Baudrillard, who sees film's role in contemporary, cool digital culture as one of combination and appropriation of past discourses.

> One has the impression of it being a question of perfect remakes, of extraordinary montages that emerge more from a combinatory culture (or McLuhanesque mosaic), of large photo-, kino-, historicosynthesis machines, etc., rather than one of veritable films. (*Simulacra and Simulation* 45)

More recently, Lev Manovich, in the *Language of New Media*, furthers the connection between technology and film McLuhan and Baudrillard stress by placing computer culture's origins (as well as its "combinatory" practices) in early cinema production. In particular, Manovich draws attention to avant-garde filmmakers' practice of collage as a predecessor to the computer revolution.

> The avant-garde strategy of collage reemerged as the "cut-and-paste" command, the most basic operation one can perform on digital data. The idea of painting on film became embedded in the paint functions of film-editing software. The avant-garde move to combine animation, printed texts, and live-action footage is repeated in the convergence of animation, title generation, paint, compositing, and editing systems into all-in-one packages. (Manovich 307)

In the rhetoric of cool, the power of technology and film is emphasized in 1963 film making. "Nowhere in its mechanical process does the camera hold either mirror or candle to nature," wrote underground filmmaker Stan Brakhage in the 1963 fall issue of *Film Culture*. "Being machine, it has always been manufacturer of the medium" (218). Like McLuhan, Brakhage understood the potential of electronic media to evoke association through non-linearity and image manipulation. His 1964 *Dog Star Man* examined personal feelings and family issues in terms of the machine, fragmented images juxtaposed through the filmic process so that they no longer maintained a relationship to their supposed referents, but rather commutated into a series of repeated shapes and lines, an almost computer simulated memory imagined prior to the creation of the personal computer. Indeed, Brakhage connected film's history with the emergence of the computer

industry, seeing technological innovation as a challenge to both the production of film and audience expectation.

> No very great effort has ever been made to interrelate these two or three processes [film and new technology], and already another is appearing possible, the projector as creative instrument with the film show a kind of performance, celluloid or tape merely source of material to the projectioning interpreter, this expression finding its origins in the color, or the scent, or even the musical organ, its most recent manifestations – the increased programming potential of the IBM and other electronic machines now capable of inventing imagery from scratch. (Brakhage 219)

In essence, what McLuhan labels as the typographic conditioning of film (and what Brakhage sees in need of revision) is the preponderance of linear storyline, what the rhetoric of cool treats as the Hollywood narrative. The Hollywood narrative is a generic term identifying commercially produced film which fulfills the promise of complete story telling. As David Bordwell states, in this type of film, "the viewer must take as a central cognitive goal the construction of a more or less intelligible story" (Bordwell 33). The intelligible story is what Ken Kelman critiqued in a 1964 *Nation* article as "completely calculated, with believable characters, developed and motivated actions, clockwork time, everything to confirm to our belief – or hope? – that the universe is a casual, rational place" ("Anticipations of the Light" 24). Writing in the September, 1963 *The Saturday Evening Post*, Pete Hamill predicted that the Hollywood narrative would soon become endangered within entertainment.

> Many of the new [underground] films are poorly tailored – amateurish and ill-conceived visual essays. In content, they may range from simple abstract games, replete with gaudy colors and  tawdry technique, to undigested intellectual clichés about this-being-a-world-we-never-made. But if the Underground is still not a New Wave, it is decidedly more than a ripple. (Hamill 82)

In 1963, the role of Hollywood production is captured by mainstream publications like *Life* magazine, whose December 20th issue celebrated "Hollywood Magic" at the movies, or *The Saturday Evening Post*, whose March 9th issue featured *Lawrence of Arabia* (1963) and whose June 1st cover highlighted *Cleopatra* (1963), two of the time period's most extravagant productions in term of financial cost and epic narrative – the history of the Arabs during the fall of the Ottoman Empire and ancient Greece.

In film, cool resists the Hollywood strategy at the levels of content and form. In particular, it follows the work of David James who reads early 1960s cinema as a movement striving to thwart the influence of Hollywood production through the creation of a radical aesthetic in film.

> Combining aesthetics and social radicalism, the formal and technical developments and the innovations in the social uses of the medium in this and several other alternative film practices of the period together constitute an epoch in the history of cinema whose significance is equaled only by its resistance to assimilation and incorporation. (*Allegories of Cinema* 4)

James argues that the new filmic aesthetic developed in the early '60s teaches how media forms create the ability to comment on their own methods of production. Typically, James contends, spectatorship forgets the elements that produce a film such as the labor, costs, and machinery as well as the role of film as commodity in an economic system of exchange. By the early '60s, counter-culture attitudes helped raise a consciousness concerned with not only form but social action as well. Film, for these artists, provided an appropriate medium for engaging with the social order, which, in turn, allowed these artists to comment on the social implications of making movies. "The dissidents who thought of themselves as beatniks or revolutionaries, as Blacks or working-class, as women or artists all had in common the decision to take control of the means of film

production to become themselves producers rather than merely consumers" (*Allegories of Cinema* 10).   Adding to James' critique, Paul Arthur comments, "If Hollywood was identified during the sixties as an armature of social and economic order, a dominant vehicle of bourgeois values, the capacity of movies as a *ritual experience* to induce antiauthoritarian attitudes is equally evident" (19). Establishing what has since been labeled "underground cinema," these filmmakers opposed "professional slickness and popular film formulas and always disdained the 'costly look'" (Tyler 32). Instead, they performed a filmic opposition to the Hollywood look by demonstrating that filmmakers can "produce extraordinary effects through manipulations that in themselves are not costly," thus rejecting the inflated budgets of mainstream film production (Tyler 4) and creating a new form of political critique. "The new artist is not interested in entertaining the viewer," Jonas Mekas declared in a 1962 *Film Culture* article. "He is making personal statements about the world today" ("Notes" 11).

Underground film peaked around the time of  Cinema 16's 1963 closing and Jonas Mekas' creation of The Film-Makers' Co-operative,[1] Amos and Marcia Vogel's Cinema 16,[2] David James explains, "educated a generation of cinéastes and provided the initial public presentation of the emerging American independent film" ("Introduction" 6). Cinema 16 screened alternative films now considered essential to any understanding of the American and European avant-garde: Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947), John Cassavetes' *Shadows* (1959) and Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie's Beat film *Pull My*

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[1] Mekas' The Film-Makers' Cooperative is still in operation and maintains a web site at: http://www.film-makerscoop.com/core.htm

[2] Cinema 16 ran from 1947-1963.

*Daisy* (1959). By 1963, Cinema 16 found itself financially in dire straits, yet still committed to providing an alternative venue for filmmakers outside of the Hollywood paradigm. Prior to the distribution/screening center's closing, Amos Vogel spoke of the challenges to independent filmmakers in a 1963 letter to the "Friends of Cinema 16."

> Cinema 16 has been able to exist for sixteen years solely because it fills the need for a pioneer who is one step ahead of the commercial cinemas, not subject to box-office or censorship pressures, oriented toward the art, rather than the commerce of film; a pioneer who continuously opens up new areas that are unacceptable, unavailable or even unknown to the commercial cinemas. (Vogel 172)

Mekas' co-operative, on the other hand, went beyond the selective alternative film choices made by the Vogels by creating an independent distribution network for all underground cinema filmmakers. Its formation grew out of Vogel's refusal to distribute Stan Brakhage's *Anticipation of the Night*, as well as Vogel's call for a more selective process of screening films. As a consequence, Mekas formed his co-operative "guaranteeing distribution to any filmmaker who submits a print" (*Allegories of Cinema* 99), a direct challenge to the marketing strategies of major companies who emphasize quick profit over artistic production.

### The Apparatus

The question for these alternative filmmakers and distributors was that of the apparatus. Underground cinema challenged traditional notions of the cinematic apparatus on several fronts. Gregory Ulmer defines the apparatus as "an interactive matrix of technology, institutional practices, and ideological subject formation" (*Heuretics* 17). In film studies, Jean-Louis Baudry characterizes the cinematic apparatus similarly, but in terms of psychoanalysis, stating "a parallel between dream and cinema has often been

noticed: common sense perceived it right away. The cinematographic projection is reminiscent of a dream, would appear to be a kind of dream, really a dream, a parallelism often noticed by the dreamer when, about to describe his dream, he is compelled to say 'It was like in a movie'" ("The Apparatus" 51). In the cinematic apparatus, the subject, Baudry contends, identifies him/herself with the dreamlike state induced by the moving picture; symbols found within the film represent experiences the subject recognizes as familiar. Whereas Baudry points to the relationship between psychoanalysis and the cinematic apparatus, 1963 underground cinema sought other purposes for film as exploration of subject identity formation and institutional order.

> The relationship of the filmic text to the cinematic apparatus (camera, film, projection system) shifted away from one of support for a symbolic and hallucinatory dream state that represented the unconscious along narrative lines. Instead, filmmakers evoked the abstractions of the unconscious logic, or focused on the material properties of film and the artifice and transparency of the production process. (Hanhardt 216)

In contrast, Baudry defines the film experience in terms of the conflicting relationship between representation and reality, the "optical construct which signals term for term the cinematographic apparatus" ("The Apparatus" 42). The effect of the apparatus on the subject (the film spectator), Baudry contends, resembles the metaphor of Plato's cave; it depends on the viewer's immobility to react.

> Taking into account the darkness of the movie theater, the relative passivity of the situation, the forced immobility of the cine-subject, and the effects which result from the projection of images, moving images, the cinematographic apparatus brings about a state of artificial regression. ("The Apparatus" 56)

This immobility of spectatorship, David James maintains, becomes the target of a radical, underground cinema, which the rhetoric of cool situates around 1963. 1963 cinema

challenges spectator habits in order to substitute the dream world of film with discussion

of its material basis. In turn, 1963 cinema replaces spectator complacency with social

activism. It does so by changing the conventions of the apparatus, by allowing new

methods for film construction to occur. For this reason, Taylor Mead declares in 1963

that the "movies are a revolution." 1963 filmic revolution advocated change in the

cinematic apparatus. Analyzing the modifications underway in 1963, Penelope Houston

wrote in the same year:

> The cinema of the sixties presents its own form of split personality: the big
> and the small; the expensive and the cheap; the very safe and the very
> daring – success can lie at either end of the scale, but is unlikely to be
> found too near the middle. (Houston 16)

Houston's overview of what she called "The Contemporary Cinema" – a global

synopsis of Italian, French, Japanese, Indian, and American filmmaking – stressed the

developing rhetorical styles of 1960s film and the ways they were altering the cinematic

apparatus.

> Some movies, it can be said, are more spontaneous than they used to be,
> more inclined to snatch at the fleeting moment; they relish ambiguity, the
> kind of Pirandellian situation in which characters are always going in
> search of their own identities, are not even entirely sure where life ends
> and film begins; they are based on a knowledge of the cinema's past which
> enables them to use quotation and allusion, to work within a frame of
> reference necessary to the creators if sometimes perplexing to the
> audience; they look as though the people making them enjoyed what they
> were doing; and they admit their own imperfections. (Houston 184)

Practically summarizing underground cinema the way James will do in the late '80s,

Houston's observation indicates an immediate impact of the new film on reception and

political change, understanding early '60s film as "resistance to Hollywood's pluperfect

technique" (Houston 186). In other words, these methods become a way to challenge the

ideology of the Hollywood apparatus. Just as Burroughs sought out new writing strategies for opposing the ideology of media production, filmmakers searched for their own methods. The ways alternative cinematic production addresses the ability of art to change dominant ideology, however, comes through the language of the film's modes of production. "Every film is thus an allegory of cinema," James states. What 1963 film initially teaches cool is the method of allegory.

> In the discourse of any film is written the context of its discourses; the functions of its production are visible in that documentation of its own production that every film performs. (*Allegories of Cinema* 12)

The purpose of filmic allegory is pedagogical; it seeks to decode the meanings of filmic production in order to reveal the dominance of an institutional order that controls how media is produced and displayed. In this way, film comments on its unavoidable capitalist nature by attempting to reject its role in a system of monetary exchange.

> The invention of filmmaking as performance, as activity – the institution of "to film" as a transitive verb complete apart from its object – marks the utopian aspiration of the underground, the point where it simultaneously confronted the medium's material nature and the capitalist use with which it had been identified historically. (*Allegories of Cinema* 120)

As such, this application of film belongs to Baudrillard's notion of cool, the discourse where signs are no longer exchanged against the real and production yields to reproduction. The allegorical practice of underground cinema attempts to erase the traditional referent of film (Hollywood). In its place, alternative, critical practices settle, practices that engage fragmentation, non-linearity, improvisation, self-reflexation, quotation, and allusion.

> Cinema plagiarizes itself, recopies itself, remakes its classics, retroactivates its original myths, remakes the silent film more perfectly than the original, etc.: all of this is logical, the cinema is fascinated by

itself as a lost object as much as it (and we) are fascinated by the real as a lost referent. The cinema and the imaginary (the novelistic, the mythical, unreality, including the delirious use of its won technique) used to have a lively, dialectical, full, dramatic relation. The relations that is being formed today between the cinema and the real is an inverse, negative relation: it results from the loss of specificity of one and of the other. The cold collage, the cool promiscuity, the asexual nuptials of two cold media that evolve in an asymptotic line toward each other: the cinema attempting to abolish itself in the cinematographic (or televised) hyperreal. (*Simulacra and Simulation* 47)

When Taylor Mead declares in 1963 that "movies are a revolution," in many ways he is promoting the rejection of traditional representation in favor of an allegorical cinema, a collagist cinema, where non-linearity and associative thought dominate narrative structures. While employing these methods for creating a new form, for content, underground cinema concentrated on subcultures, the quotidian, supposedly, real people instead of actors, improvisation for subject matter, and notably, jazz.. "Underground film was the parallel in that medium to the beat attempt to re-create in writing the aesthetic and social functions of jazz" (*Allegories of Cinema* 98). In this regard, and as I will deal with in more detail later in this chapter as this relationship unfolds, music and film juxtapose in 1963 and teach the rhetoric of cool ways technology shapes discourse. Following Friedrich Kittler's analysis of twentieth century discourse, then, "ears and eyes have become autonomous" as cinema and musical production produce writing (Kittler 3).

**The Absence of Narrative**

The conventions of narrative that Hollywood production understands so well become shunned in underground cinema. Underground cinema's lack of narrative structure, however, does not lead to the complete breakdown of representation. The desire to challenge conventional forms and to comment on the relationship between art

and production includes the need to create some sense of representation so that meaning

isn't abandoned. Barthes writes,

> Everything has a meaning, even nonsense (which has at least the
> secondary meaning of being nonsense). Meaning is so fated for mankind
> that art (as liberty) seems to be used, especially today, not for making
> sense, but on the contrary for keeping it in suspense; for constructing
> meanings, but without filling them in exactly. ("On Film" 19)

Those films that challenge structure in 1963 by proposing new ways to construct

meanings – Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures*, Ron Rice's *The Queen of Sheba Meets the*

*Atom Man*, Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising*, and Stan Brakhage's *Mothlight* - alter

previously accepted notions of narrative. They proposed disjunction and, almost as a

response to Barthes, nonsense as producers of knowledge in the filmic apparatus. As

filmmaker Jack Smith wrote:

> I don't feel nonsense in movies as a threat to my mind since I don't go to
> movies for the ideas that arise from sensibleness of ideas. Images evoke
> feelings and ideas that are suggested by feeling. Nonsense as one given
> right might arouse contemptuous feeling and leave me with the ideas of
> resolution which I might extend to personal problems and thus I might be
> left with great sense. (Smith 99-100)

In lieu of the storylines favored by Hollywood production, fragmented narratives

(so called nonsense narratives) guided by the iconic placements of cultural markers, lack

of dialogue, and dissonant sound tracks take over in underground cinema, earning the

films marginal status within the filmic apparatus. In addition, for their time period, these

films generated a cultural response which deemed them obscene. Nudity and sexual

transgression displayed in these films provoked moral outrage from a society already

directing anger at the counter-culture environment from which these films arose. "People

perceived underground films not only as dirty, but also as documents of a perverse

subculture" (Siegel 92). Thus, the content of the films as well as the producers earned a moniker of marginality. By doing so, these films created what Jonas Mekas, writing in 1963, called the new cinema, a voice for marginal discourse in the post war era.

> The new artist knows that most of what's publicly said today is corrupt and distorted. He knows that the truth is somewhere else, not in the *NY Times* and not in *Pravda*. He knows that he must do something about it, for his own conscience that he must rebel against the tightening web of lies. ("Notes" 14)

What Mekas calls "lies" include the expectations of form construction. A better word for "lies" might be myths. The myth of Hollywood film production is that movies must have plot, characters, action, and a climax or resolution. The filmic process may recognize that the process of making movies is disjointed and non-linear, but the final product often does not reveal that film, as Kittler states, "began with reels, cuts and splices" (Kittler 115). Hollywood cinema emphasizes continuity over film's propensity for montage as dislocation (hence McLuhan's interest in Eisenstein) and instead uses the montage editing process to create a seamless product. Even though montage editing techniques bring together disparate moments, the audience believes that a continuous narrative exists. Robert Ray points out that Hollywood's continuity protocols were

> founded on the two principles of matching and centering, both designed to overcome film's fundamental discontinuity. While the matching rules ensured that editing would connect shots by means of certain cinematic grammar, centering guaranteed that all mise-en-scéne elements (for example, lighting, framing, shot size) would visually underline narratively important events. (Ray 35)

Film critic Colin MacCabe suggests a shift in this viewpoint occurring around 1963 in Jean Luc Godard's work. In particular, MacCabe finds Godard's 1964 *Une Femme mariée* indicative of the director's split with continuity editing. Even though

Godard's earlier films contained disjointed narrative cuts, and even though Godard was one of several new filmmakers in the early '50s challenging narrative, he was still classified as having a "fascination with Hollywood cinema" because of a "pessimistic romanticism and a particularly elliptical cutting style" (MacCabe 20). MacCabe argues that "in 1964, we can notice a different emphasis" present in Godard's films, brought on by a lack of coherent viewpoint.

> This lack of a coherent view enables the film to break down a unified image of a woman's body, held in a man's look, and to provide instead a series of disconnected images which resist attempts at unification. (MacCabe 35)

Like Godard, the American filmmakers of the early '60s resisted unification. They did so through Andrew Sarris' 1963 endorsement of a "systematic reappraisal of the American cinema, director by director and film by film" (1) as well as Mekas' call in the same year for a cinema "free of any rational restrictiveness" ("Press Release" 8). More important to this abandonment of traditional Hollywood form, though, these filmmakers understood film as possessing the capability of political opposition, what James calls "the construction of alternative communities based upon art and the communal aestheticization of daily life that transformed it into political practice" (119). Thus, these works resemble Burroughs' cut-up or Himes' signifyin(g) in that they debate political practice and ideology as well as offer counter-strategies for opposing dominant systems of discourse. As I discussed in Chapter Two, the filmic provides Burroughs with an analogy for how discourse can be manipulated in the electronic age. His comments serve the underground cinema artists as well. As part of his overall interest in media manipulation, Burroughs directed considerable attention to mainstream film production

and distribution companies as controlling interests in a society increasingly drawn to information and entertainment. The purpose of new media practices is not to replicate this pre-existing structure, but to subvert it.

> The film bank is empty. To conceal the bankruptcy of the reality studio it is essential that no one should be in position to set up another reality set. The reality film has now become an instrument and weapon of monopoly. The full weight of the film is directed against anyone who calls the film in question with particular attention to writers and artists. Work for the reality studio or else. (*Ticket That Exploded* 151)

Indeed, Burroughs' directive can be applied to film via the 1963 collage.

## Hollywood Vs The Underground

In the Hollywood model, filmic representations of cool can be seen in a series of films emerging out of the 1963 juxtaposition. A brief survey of some of these films reveals that the Hollywood treatment of cool actually supports the dominant order; that is, these films present themselves on the surface as aligned with the traditional spirit of cool (rebellion, teenage angst) but perform otherwise. First, George Lucas' 1972 *American Graffiti* treats 1963 as the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the '60s. Set in 1962, Lucas attempts to recapture a part of America that by the early '70s (the death of the love generation/the approach of disco) seemed lost forever. A group of high school kids spend one last night on the town before Steve (Ron Howard) and Curt (Richard Dreyfuss) plan to go off to college. Their departure echoes a cultural abandonment of '50s values. The film paints a nostalgic desire to return to pre-Vietnam America, an America still strong and proud after World War II, an America not yet tainted by a hopelessly lost war nor rejected by its youth. As Lucas has stated:

> I decided it was time to make a movie where people felt better coming out of the theater than when they went in. I became really aware of the fact

that the kids were really lost, the sort of heritage we built up since the war [World War II] had been wiped out by the '60s, and it wasn't groovy to act that way anymore, now you just sort of sat there and got stoned. I wanted to preserve what a certain generation of Americans thought being a teenager was really about – from 1945 to 1962. (qtd in Biskind 235)

Like Kerouac's work, *American Graffiti* treats cool as nostalgia. Through the juxtaposition of carefully placed cultural markers, The narrative of the film presents its audience with a collage of idyllic '50s signifiers: the drive in, buying booze underage, cool cars like the 56 T-Bird, 55 Chevy, and a soup-uped Deuce Coup, playing chicken, high school dances, and hip DJs spinning records and dedications late into the night. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, Fredric Jameson faults the nostalgia film (in particular, *American Graffiti*) for not being historical. Jameson understands the film not as "'representation' of historical content" but as comprehension of the past through style ("Postmodernism" 67). Lucas does not discuss those elements of the '50s which were not conducive to innocence: the Greensboro, North Carolina lunch counter sit ins, George Wallace, segregated water fountains, or any other racially charged event which disturbs a conservative, nostalgic view of '50s culture. Therefore, *American Graffiti* cannot be considered a "representation" of history. We can think of its use of style as the *mise en scene* (late '50s American car culture), as the fashion displayed throughout the film (the mysterious blond girl's T-Bird/John Milner's white t-shirt with Camel cigarette box rolled up in his sleeve), or as the way in which the medium utilizes the iconic object for purposes of connotation. *American Graffiti* accumulates a variety of images in order to produce a series of signifiers that mark a space physically and emotionally.

*American Graffiti's* marker of the cool figure appears in the character John Milner. Like other cool figures, Milner is aloof, distant, detached, and yet still part of the

local high school and drag racing scene. Milner as sign draws upon a history of Hollywood representations of the cool figure. Notably, 1950s films like *Jailhouse Rock* (1957), *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955) and *The Wild One* (1957) treat the cool individual similarly. Often surrounded by rock and roll music, these figures appear marginal and alienated; their behavior appears at odds with the controlling cultural and educational institutions. They embody the cry of Jim (James Dean) in *Rebel Without A Cause* (1955): "You're tearing me apart!" Whether or not these cool figures represent anti-authority sentiment, however, remains questionable, for they are Hollywood productions. Leerom Medovoi expands this point, writing, "One might suppose that it is *The Blackboard Jungle's* precise status as Hollywood's first rock-and roll teeenpic that enabled it to voice for young people an incipiently political articulation of their resistance to the America of their parents" (139). The question for the Hollywood constructed cool figure is whether or not such a figure serves the rhetoric of cool or is in opposition to its purpose.

The predecessors of *American Graffiti's* Milner function as the same troubled, alienated youth caught between tradition and rebellion. *Rebel Without A Cause*, for example, centers around the survival of the nuclear family; even in rebellion, Jim, Judy (Natalie Wood), and Plato (Sal Mineo) create their own family of father, mother, and child after they have left the real life authority figures behind. While it may appear that the trio experiment with and transform the family order, they, in fact, re-establish the same hierarchy that drove them out of their homes in the first place. Hiding in an abandoned home, Jim, Judy, and Plato become a nuclear family: Jim is the father, Judy the mother, Plato the son. *The Blackboard Jungle's* Gregory Miller (Sidney Potier), on the other hand, signifies the alienated African-American student in an inner city

classroom whom newly appointed teacher Richard Dadier (Glen Ford) seeks as an ally in controlling the school's unruly students. The students exhibit the popular perception of cool: they wear leather jackets; their hair is greased; they speak slang; they're violent and anti-authority. But Miller contrasts with their behavior; he seeks a respectful job as a mechanic and takes no part in the attack on Dadier (a seemingly opposite view of Mailer's version of black culture of the 1950s). By the end of the film, Miller's rebellion is not against the school system, like the other students, but rather against rebellion in general. Miller assists Dadier in putting down a class revolt.

*The Blackboard Jungle's* reputation as a film about rebellion stems from its pre-narrative beginning, an anti-juvenile delinquency stance which fills the screen declaring, "Today we are concerned with juvenile delinquency – its causes – and its effects. We believe that public awareness is a first step toward a remedy for any problem." From its early show of authoritarian support, *The Blackboard Jungle* promises to defend the system. This position is re-enforced in the film's character portrayals. Allying himself with the teacher Dadier, Miller accepts the dominant order (the school system) and, along with the other students, lives happily ever after when the teacher's authority is reinstated. In other words, the white system has taught the black student how to behave and succeed. In the Hollywood production, cool as rebellion means, in actuality, acceptance.

> This film's message is that even those few young people (white and non-white) seemingly fated for economic hardship can still alter their future if they make a constructive moral commitment to respect, obey, and identify with the middle class white men who will show them the road to success. Otherwise, they are doomed. (Medovoi 143)

Likewise, *The Wild One* treats the cool figure as not an outcast opposing the dominant discourse, but one eager to accept its limits and regulations. The film's most

famous scene has its main character Johnny (Marlon Brando) deliver the ultimate cool line of detachment and rebellion. A fellow biker asks: "Hey, Johnny, watchya rebelling against?" Johnny replies, "Watchya got?" The line suggests that everything has the potential to be rebelled against. What quickly becomes evident, however, is that Johnny is rebelling against being a rebel. Dramatized in the scene where he breaks down crying over the woman he can't have, Johnny's cool statue reduces to infantilism and the desire to be loved. The trite Hollywood understanding of cool collapses.

> The antagonism between street-Cool and social activism became a cliché of certain movies and novels of the time – from *On the Waterfront* (1954) and *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955) all the way to *West Side Story* (1957) – where the stereotypical big-hearted teacher/cop/priest/social worker tires to inculcate social responsibility into street-wise Cool kids, whose response may be paraphrased as 'only suckers care.' (Pountain and Robins 63-64)

The Hollywood narrative understands cool within the boundaries of individuals seeking out ways to be accepted by the dominant order by falsifying a rebel stance. The new cinema of 1963 weakens cool's attention to personality (not being understood, feeling alienated) by transforming it into a cinematic, rhetorical style. The clichés of cool as bikers, hoodlums, and wayward teenagers looking for a drag race or a knife fight disappear as the new films examine the construction of narrative and ways to resist the Hollywood order.

### *Flaming Creatures*

Marc Siegel pinpoints the 1963 debut of Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* as a major moment for cinema. For Siegel, Jonas Mekas' 1963 crashing of the annual Flaherty Seminar in Brattleboro, Vermont in order to show Smith's film to the gathering of film aficionados challenged the traditional notions of the true cinema.

> This intervention went largely without notice, and Mekas had to content himself with a midnight screening and a small, though enthusiastic, audience. He vowed to return another time to disturb those who "slept peacefully dream[ing] cinema verité." (Siegel 91)

Smith's film allows my project to rethink Hollywood's cool figure in terms of the collagist body. *Flaming Creatures* treats film as collage via the body. Through a series of orgiastic sequences, bodies contort over one another, twisting in a variety of shapes, erasing each other's genitalia, juxtaposing male and female into something other altogether. The result of these combinations creates a new sexuality, a hybrid at first understood as transvestitism, but later conceived as possibly something closer to a new filmic rhetoric where eclectic shot juxtapositions are represented in physical body space. It is, however, a rhetoric informed by an allegorical sexuality, in which sexual obscenity speaks to the larger cultural obscenity of exclusion: segregation, outlawed same sex marriage laws, denial of women's rights. These issues magnify other social problems, for the body creates and transgresses societal norms. Paralleling Smith's work, Ron Rice's *Queen of Sheba Meets the Atom Man* (1963) makes the allegory explicit in a juxtaposition of a jar of heroin (marked "heroin" on its outside) with an American gas station sign. If anything is obscene, Rice implies, it isn't the appearance in the film of a large, naked African-American woman on a couch, but the economic ties between narcotic distribution and big business (represented by a gas company whose name equals the nation's). For Rice, the body equals commercial bodies. In Smith's work, the allegory meshes the filmic body with the human body.

*Flaming Creatures* begins with a drag queen applying lipstick while an advertisement for women's lipstick gives instructions for the application. Aimed at an

audience of women, the ad is juxtaposed onto the actions of a man, who, in turn, has assembled women's clothing onto his body. The traditional advertising marketing technique – show an individual using the item – becomes distorted. Lipstick is meant for women, not men, and particularly not men who dress as women. Early on, then, the film questions the relationship between marketing and gender by presenting a product's purpose as recontextualized. In Chapter Two, we witnessed similar examples of critique in Adbusters' appropriative gestures.

Writing about *Flaming Creatures* in 1963, Ken Kelman referred to these types of juxtapositions as a challenge to the "realm of myths and beauties, myths and beauties invoked to more than 'sublimate' the 'obscenities' displayed, myths and beauties evoked through obscenities" ("Smith Myth" 4). As Kelman suggests, Smith decodes the myth of sexuality through a popular conception of obscenity: the transvestite. Smith's transvestites push the viewer to question the gender of the characters on the screen, simultaneously asking the audience to question its own general understandings of gender construction. Smith's drag queens reveal penises, dance the tango, dress up as vampires (a pun on the Hollywood "vamp"). But the sex act never takes place. The transgression treats visuality and taste as style; therefore, its obscenity derives not from filmed copulation but from a visual offense that questions audience expectation of gender. Smith's challenge to the filmic apparatus, therefore, is also a challenge to the cultural apparatus, treating both as artifice. Our understandings of gender are artificially constructed.

Smith's allegory of sexual transgression preempts Susan Sontag's "Notes on Camp," written the year following the film's release. Sontag's often cited treatise on

Camp explained a fascination with fetish and kitsch that has since become identified with gay culture. Sontag defines Camp through the notion of artifice. "All Camp objects, and persons, contain a large element of artifice. . .Camp responds to the markedly attenuated and the strongly exaggerated. The androgyne is certainly one the great images of Camp sensibility"("Notes on Camp" 279). Spiegel carries Sontag's observation further by suggesting a Camp sensibility to Smith's work. "Smith embraced (cinematic) artifice as a necessary precondition for the acting out of fantasies" (Spiegel 97). Again, those fantasies include the ways we think about gender on a daily basis.

One can deduce from the artifice the cultural fantasy of heterosexuality as well as the allegorical reading of the fantasy of complete narrative structure (doubly captured in the cultural narrative of meeting the right person of the opposite sex, falling in love, raising a family--what Stan Brakhage referred to in 1963 as "having the dream piped into their homes" (213)). The viewer witnesses this artifice collapse within the film's disparate parts as well as its lack of coherent narrative. Allegorizing filmic production, the cultural dreams of relationship construction suggest the Hollywood "dream factory," a point John Hanhardt emphasizes.

> Using costumes and imaginary scenes drawn from such cult Hollywood figures as Maria Montez and Marlene Dietrich, Smith and his performers stripped away the narrative of movie myths to reveal the visual texture and erotic subtext of the "dream factory." Smith's mise-en-scène was roughened by the use of old (and cheap) film stocks, and faded celluloid that produced ghostlike penumbrae around the images of his imaginary Hollywood. (232)

Added to the mix are the lapses in synch between soundtrack and image, body display and gender. The power of Smith's overall critique of cultural and artistic gendered constructions, however, lies not in interpretation (the literate practice of

hermeneutics) but in image display (the electronic practice of iconicity). As Sontag writes:

> There are no ideas, no symbols, no commentary on or critique of anything in *Flaming Creatures*. Smith's film is strictly a treat for the senses. In this it is the very opposite of a "literary" film (which is what so many French avant-garde films were). It is not in the knowing about, or being able to interpret, what one sees, that the pleasure of *Flaming Creatures* lies; but in the directness, the power, and the lavish quantity of the images themselves. ("Jack Smith's Flaming Creatures" 229)

Although Sontag dismisses all elements of critique in *Flaming Creatures*, we can apply her observation of the film's non-literary status as a contributor to the rhetoric of cool. If the film is indeed non-literary, it is because of its disjointed images and soundtrack, an alternative film grammar to the Hollywood narrative,[3] whose study has been the central subject of film studies as literary studies. The alternative, as proposed by *Flaming Creatures*, is a non-literary film, one that isn't "literate" because of its rejection of a common language. "For film unborn as it is has no language," wrote Stan Brakhage (214). The filmic challenge to a traditional notion of media literacy will return in the ensuing discussion of hip hop and scratching.

### The Deviant Grammar

Smith's version of sexuality operates by an unstructured grammar not unlike Burroughs' cut-ups or collaborative films of the same year; a grammar in which disjointed image display produces alternative commentary and critique (in this case, the nature of sexuality). *Flaming Creatures* also strikes a similarity with John Rechy's 1963 novel *City of Night*, a vision of the non-heterosexual side of America, the gay male

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[3] See Christian Metz for a complete discussion on film grammar

prostitute culture of New York and California in the early '60s. In Rechy's text, like Smith's, grammar breaks down in language and in personal relationships. The narrative's misspellings, run on sentences, and lack of punctuation indicate a post war breakdown in personal association, one in which prostitution guides emotion This absence of feeling marks another point of cultural cool. Like Smith's film, in Rechy's novel the borders of sexuality become dismantled in acts of violence or proposed violence. As one "youngman" tells the narrator:

> "Man," hes saying, his eyes shifting scanning the street for a prospect, "you know what Im gonna do tonight? Im gonna find me a rich queer and clip him for every coin – I mean, Im gonna leave him pantless! . . . But, see, I ain't been here too long – and I don't know the scene too good yet. So, see, what I'd dig: I'd dig finding some swinging cat wholl help me clip the queer – you know – take him to a dark street  - or some cool pad youre Sure of . ." (183)

For sociologist Howard Becker, homosexuality marks a moment of cultural deviance, not rebellion against conventional form. Becker's 1963 study, *The Outsiders*, attempted to outline the ways deviant behavior functions and can be remedied. Becker's intolerance for sexual lifestyles outside of the institutionalized heterosexual relationship stands out strongly in his report.

> We are not so much interested in the person who commits a deviant act once as in the person who sustains a pattern of deviance over a long period of time, who organizes his identity around a pattern of deviant behavior. It is not the casual experimenters with homosexuality (who turned up in such surprisingly large numbers in the Kinsey Report) that we want to find out about, but the man who follows a pattern of homosexual activity throughout his life. (Becker 30)

Becker's hatred of sexual deviance was poet Frank O'Hara's celebration. O'Hara's 1964 collection *Lunch Poems* treated tales of love (typically homosexual love),

popular culture, and the city as intertwined in their own discretions and acts of deviance.

In "Naphtha," O'Hara writes:

> we owe a debt to the Iroquois
> and to Duke Ellington
> for playing in the buildings when they are build
> we don't do much ourselves
> but fuck and think
> of the haunting Métro. (30-31)

In O'Hara's work, sex functions the way provocative art does. Each provides a sense of deviance to both vernacular and poetic expression. The borders between mass culture (Duke Ellington, for example) and high culture (poetry) collapse and reform in sexuality. In *Flaming Creatures*, rock and roll songs like rebel-singer Gene Vincent's "Be Bob a Lula" overlap the continuing orgy of sex. We see it again in O'Hara's "Steps"; only, this time, the movie star replaces the role of the musician.

> How funny you are today New York
> like Ginger Rogers in Swingtime
> and St Bridget's steeple leaning a little to the left
>
> here I have just jumped out of a bed full of V-days
> (I got tired of D-days) and blue you there still
> accepts me foolish and free
> all I want is a room up there
> and you in it. (56)

O'Hara's iconic placement of Ginger Rogers within the narrative of his poem prompts sexual identification: the male voice identifies the assumed other male as female. In this way, O'Hara's poetry suggests the so-called "deviant" identity formation (Becker's definition) informed by celebrity. Where celebrity image and sexuality juxtapose, Smith found instructions for a new cultural pedagogy. Like O'Hara's poems, Smith felt that art instruction should incorporate the iconic celebration of entertainment

figures, particularly movie stars. As he wrote in 1963, art should be "loaded with information worked into the vapid plots of movies" (Smith 20). Specific instructions for how to carry out this activity include the examples of "Humphrey Bogart struggling to introduce a basic civil rights law course into public schools" or "Donut shaped public dwellings with sunlight pouring into central patios for all, designed by Gary Cooper" (Smith 21). Smith's lesson for film and cool involves incorporating the figures of popular culture into the medium itself for an extended cultural critique. Thus, a filmic pedagogy emerges. In Kenneth Anger's 1963 *Scorpio Rising*, these instructions extend to include an assortment of popular culture figures whose images are not just placed within the narrative but guide the narrative.

### *Scorpio Rising*

Reading *Scorpio Rising* within the context of the 1963 collage grants the rhetoric of cool additional instructions on how to construct electronic discourse. Notably, Anger's lesson for cool involves commutation and pattern creation. Scorpio Rising demonstrates what Juan Suarez calls "strategies by which subcultures engage with popular culture" and "become principles of construction for avant-garde texts" (Suarez 21). A film not only about popular culture, but one constructed from popular culture, *Scorpio Rising* recontextualizes popular culture artifacts as critique of cultural assumptions regarding media representation and homosexuality. "Anger's reprocessing of culturally manufactured symbols," as Ed Lowry writes, "is truly iconoclastic, in the literal sense of destroying sacred images" (41). In creating an alternative film structure, the images Anger razes include those items of popular culture often deemed "sacred": the icons of Marlon Brando, James Dean, and even Jesus Christ, representations which have acquired

a significant amount of cultural capital in media mythology. The representations of these figures have come to signify something greater than their individual lives. As I noted in Chapter Two, such notions of art and literature have dominated public impressions of the Beat writers. Their writings have been overshadowed by mythologies of their lives. When the mythology of personality is challenged, new understandings of culture and discourse develop. Nostalgia for figures' lives becomes replaced. In some ways, as in Kerouac and Bearden's work, Anger's usage of the icon is what David Curtis refers to as nostalgia formed from a "combination of 'pop' and mythology" (Curtis 64). Each iconic choice is guided by emotion, an emotion often dictated by media influence (going to the movies, watching television, reading comic books). Anger's nostalgia, however, is destroyed and reshaped; the film suggests an alternative cinema, one in which nostalgic representation is replaced by pattern formation. Anger doesn't represent Brando or the nostalgic longing for the Brando rebel, for instance, but uses Brando's iconic status to create a new filmic practice.

Seen in various contexts throughout the film, patterns motivate Anger's critique. For instance, beginning with the film's first image, the words and image of the scorpion repeat. *Scorpio Rising* treats the scorpion as an indicator of how pattern creation becomes a narrative/critical principle. In the film's opening sequence, we see the Scorpio/scorpion image on the back of Scorpio's leather jacket, later a scorpion coaster appears on Scorpio's desk, Scorpio picks up a scorpion encased in amber, and the scorpion encircled image appears juxtaposed within the montage of the concluding motorbike race sequence. Other images perform likewise. Against Scorpio's wall, various manifestations of James Dean's image are taped up (in the middle of the display hangs a diploma, possibly an

unintended, suggested lesson for academic writing or for Ulmer's chorography – use all the meanings of the word/image). Skulls materialize in rings, posters, and images on the television. A skull is juxtaposed to the conclusion of the sequence featuring the song "My Boyfriend's Back," celebrants in the party scene wear skull masks, and near the film's end, a drawing of a skull features the image of Jesus within mirrored sunglasses. At one point, an intercut shot reveals a row of trophies that likely sit in Scorpio's room. The trophies are a reminder of the trophy Marlon Brando's Johnny fights over in *The Wild One*.

Where the Hollywood film treats cool as packaged rebellion (as seen in *The Wild One*'s biker gangs and *Rebel Without A* Cause's alienated youth), Anger reinvents the subjects and conveyers of cool as discursive modes. In particular, the indifferent poses of such figures as Marlon Brando and James Dean transform into the objects of fetishistic practice. The lives of these celebrities disappear; their culturally, patterned images take over as discourse. Again, Baudrillard's theory of cool as commutation discloses itself. Only here the commutations create patterns, webs of meaning appropriate to the mosaic McLuhan describes as cool. *Scorpio Rising* supports a mass commutation of signs. In one sequence, male rebel figures commutate from the lead biker figure Scorpio to Brando to Jesus, implying a dynamic at work within the ways we read popular culture figures. The transformation reflects the ambiguity in visual and iconic language Ken Kelman described as "the confusion of role (hero, villain, stooge, overman, herd-man, decadent, nihilist, antichrist, fanatic), among the three counterparts of Scorpio (Brando, Hitler, Christ)" ("Thanatos in Chrome" 7). For P. Adams Sitney, the commutation of Scorpio into various signs creates alternative narratives within one visual display. In particular,

the juxtapositions of Jesus and Scorpio's activities (found footage from Cecil B. Demille's *King of Kings* with Scorpio preparing for and participating in the bike race) create a variety of spectator decisions regarding what takes place on the screen.

> Through the montage we learn what Scorpio would do if he were Christ, or perhaps what he thinks Christ really must have done: when Christ approaches the blind beggar, Scorpio would have kicked him, as he kicks the wheel of his motorcycle, and would have given him a ticket for loitering, as a cop places a parking violation on the bike; Christ touches the blind man's eyes; through a very quick intercut we see that Scorpio would have shown him a "dirty picture"; and when the beggar goes down on his knees before Christ, Scorpio offers him his stiff penis. (Sitney 121)

Elsewhere in the film, other commutations occur. The Sunday comics no longer serve as leisurely entertainment (or even re-enforcement of 1950s conservative values, as in the case of Al Capp's *Li'l Abner*) but rather the comics pages' narratives, in the hands of Scorpio, become attestations to homosexual relationships. Fragment snippets of the comic strips *Li'l Abner*, *Dondi,* and *Freckles and His Friends* filmed close up no longer signify the narratives of these respective works but become newly, contexualized homosexual love. *Li'l Abner's* title, "The Sons Also Rise" transforms into a pun on homosexual sex; the strip's dialogue, spoken by two barefoot boys with their arms around each other is as follows:

> Yo' Skonk Hollowers Hain't so diff'runt fum us dogpatchers – 'cept maybe dirtier as all. . .

Recontextualized the exchange identifies the notion of "dirty" with gay love or with conservative values. The ambiguity leaves both as options, and yet this same ambiguity critiques limited 1963 viewpoints regarding gender relationships. Such narrow perceptions of gender include those of Howard Becker, who, as noted, labeled

homosexuality deviant. The isolated panel of *Freckles and His Friends* makes a similar

gesture. Two characters interact:

> "Queenie sleeps in my bed. That leaves the other one empty."
> "Are you offering to share your room with me?"

and the recontextualized perception is that they are engaging in dialogue about sleeping

with one another; the supposed innocent reading becomes lost. "Most deviant groups

have a self-justifying rationale (or 'ideology'), although seldom is it as well worked out

as that of the homosexual," Becker wrote (Becker 38). Anger allegorizes this attitude by

simultaneously reforming the self-justifying rationale of dominant ideologies at the level

of gender (gays are deviant) and form (narrative is linear). The collagist juxtaposition of

the comic book pages with Scorpio's homosexuality is more than a statement on gender.

It marks an additional moment within the rhetoric of cool where critique takes place in

non-traditional forms. In this case, the critique is guided by pattern formation and

commutation. In the 1964 English translation of *Elements of Semiology*, Roland Barthes

defines commutation as belonging to the syntagmatic plane of language. We can think of

the commutations of signs Anger produces as belonging to Hjelmslev's "commutation

test," which Barthes describes accordingly:

> The commutation test consists of artificially introducing a change in the
> plane of expression (signifiers) and in observing whether this change
> brings about a correlative modification on the plane of content
> (signification). (*Elements of Semiology* 65)

The effect of Anger's film indicates such a modification. The need to modify

cultural codes comes from an interpretation of such codes as oppressive and in need of

alternation Juxtaposed with a major media form from its time period, the newspaper,

Anger's critique of dominant gender ideology makes sense. Robert Doty's December 17,

1963 *New York Times* front page article "Growth of Overt Homosexuality in City Provokes Wide Concern" described the harassment of New York homosexual establishments as an early step towards preventing impending doom on the city's heterosexual values.

> The city's most sensitive open secret–the presence of what is probably the greatest homosexual population in the world and its increasing openness - has become the subject of growing concern of psychiatrists, religious leaders and the police. (1)

Quoted in the article, Monsignor Robert Gallagher of the Youth Counseling Service of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York clarified the need for such crackdowns: "The increase in homosexuality is only one aspect of the general atmosphere of moral breakdown that has been going on around us" (33) This breakdown replicates the attitudes portrayed in Smith and Anger's work: heterosexual values remade into a new sexual language. The article continues:

> The absence of any legal ties, plus the basic emotional instability that is inherent in many homosexuals, cause most such homosexual partnerships to founder on the jealousies and personality clashes that heterosexual union would survive. Hence, most homosexuals are condemned to a life of promiscuity – the cruising of bars seeking casual partners. (33)

Social deviance, Doty informs his readership, is itself a result of commutation. Dress and lifestyle are commutated so that the traditional heterosexual roles no longer fit as nicely as they once did. In this way, even an article like Doty's, which allows the comment "The homosexual is ill" to go unchallenged, highlights the role of commutation in 1963.

> They have their favored clothing suppliers who specialize in the right slacks, short-cut coats and fastidious furnishings favored by many, but by no means all, male homosexuals. There is a homosexual jargon, once intelligible only to the initiate, but now part of New York slang [Homosexuals] are to be found in every conceivable line of work, from truck driving to coupon clipping. But they are most concentrated–or most

noticeable–in the fields of the creative and performing arts and industries serving women's beauty and fashion needs. (33)

The *New York Times* critique reflects the dominant notions of domesticity and gender that Anger found troublesome. Homosexuals, the *Times* reports, are more likely to be involved in the women's fashion industry or to be wearing effeminate dress. Anger's biker jackets and motorcycles do not fit the stereotype of an effeminate man working in the theater, which Doty claims has become a "self perpetuating" role (33). Tom Wesselmann's collages *Still Life #20* (1962) and *Still Life #30* (1963) continue the critique of a gender-based dominant ideology. In Wesselmann's work, the home transforms into the collage, the items of everyday life commutate into a pattern from which a gendered, self-identification occurs and in which the clichéd statement "A women's place is in the home" is left open for other inclusions. Furthermore, Wesselmann's *Still Life #30* incorporates not only representations of everyday life, but the very items themselves: a real refrigerator door and actual Seven-Up bottles juxtaposed with cut outs of commercial food products. Just as Anger's collage asks viewers to consider the filmic world of juxtapositions in place of the one they actually live in, Wesselmann's collages of kitchens and home life suggest likewise. Like Anger's juxtapositions, Wesselmann's paintings challenge traditional male and female roles. The spectator finds him/herself within the kitchen, not looking at a representation of a kitchen, but participating in the space of a kitchen. The cinema space may allow for a certain shift in identification, but Wesselmann's paintings place reception in the very space itself. How one relates to that situation prompts the role one plays in the domicile

environment. The male can then become feminized through the viewing experience. As Cécile Whiting explains:

> The suburban kitchen in *Still Life #30* appropriated the visual codes developed in women's home and service magazines to display tasteful spaces of consumption managed and directed by the efficient middle-class female homemaker and consumer. (57)

In Wesselmann's *Still Life #29* (1963) a working television set mixes with a portrait of Abraham Lincoln. In *Still Life #31* (1963), a television set sits beside the image of George Washington. The icons we create and fetishize (even presidents), the television sets indicate, derive from media formations. In *Scorpio Rising*, the iconic status of the television set (which is present in Scorpio's room) in American culture doubles as it too projects the iconic image: Brando, Jesus, the Jewish Menorah, and the Christian Cross. Notably, these last images, along with the inclusion of Nazi swastikas, have been the subject of Anger's supposed anti-Semitism. The television's manipulation of imagery, however, functions not as support for Nazi imagery but as a reminder of Burroughs' concerns that mass media maintains a fascist stronghold on identity, one that leads to addiction and submission to the institutional order. The media maintains totalitarian control, the film's iconic displays propose. As in Haskell Wexler's 1969 *Medium Cool*, information technology lives or dies by its own method of representation. In *Medium Cool*'s highly quoted ending, the cameraman, who early in the film's beginning is seen filming a highway accident without assisting the victims, finds himself filmed by another set of cameramen, who see his own traffic accident as an additional moment of detached filmic experience, an iconic display that will later be edited and montaged for the evening news. Anger's biker gangs are not the dominant factors of media violence but rather

media in general. In a greater context, dominant systems of thinking, of which the media is just one – the government, church, family are others – quickly become totalitarian. Anger's task, as Lowry indicates, involves "robbing symbols of their dominant signification to infuse them with a subversive power" (41). The way to challenge totalitarianism, in other words, is to undermine its icons.

Within mass media, music plays an influential role in this task. Like Smith, Anger uses disjointed soundtracks, music that appears unrelated to what takes place on the screen. Ed Lowry's close reading of *Scorpio Rising* aligns the thirteen songs in the film with the film's iconic display of imagery. His close reading of the film's soundtrack allows for additional insight into how music informs the rhetoric of cool. Particularly, *Scorpio Rising's* songs become commutated as well so that meanings shift, often from heterosexual to homosexual emotions. For example, The Angels' 1963 "My Boyfriend's Back" no longer describes a woman yearning for her man, but a man yielding to another man's return  - or even to his bike. Machine and homosexuality replace heterosexual expectations as to what comprises a relationship. In the very next sequence, the line from Bobby Vinton's 1963 "Blue Velvet," "She wore blue velvet," now refers to a biker. She morphs into he. The sexual transgressions, like in Smith's films, allegorize a larger understanding of signification transgression where meanings consistently shift. As Lowry explains in detail:

> The juxtaposition proposes sexual role reversal, finalizing the homosexual shift only hinted at in the previous sequences. The effect is not one of feminizing the cyclists, but of making them overtly sexual. The camera voyeuristically watches as a tattooed man pulls on a t-shirt, and pans slowly across the reclining body of another bare-chested cyclist. (43)

The disjointed juxtaposition of music and narrative in *Scorpio Rising* parallels the role music plays in the 1963 collage. In fact, as Suarez indicates, the best way to think of Anger's film is as music/text/image collage: "*Scorpio Rising* constitutes an intertextual collage; its fragments are not recuperated as parts of a whole, as in montage, but remain in proper dispersion (26)." The collage includes the juxtaposition of music and image as well. More importantly, Anger's usage of music informs this chapter's next section on technology. Because Anger commutates musical narratives ("My Boyfriend's Back" no longer tells the same story, for instance), music continues to teach the rhetoric of cool the role of commutation, in particular, the ways commutation affects African-American musical forms.

### Music: Blue Note Records

The move from the iconic displays of Wesselmann and Anger to music also comes from rock critic Robert Christgau. Christgau's decision to become a critic stems from a moment in 1963.

> Early in 1963, I walked into the Green Gallery on West 57th Street. The show was eight or ten of Tom Wesselmann's Great American Nudes – sprawling flat-pink ladies surrounded by outsized magazine-ad images, with vistas from *Better Home and Gardens* pasted behind each window and with miniature Mondrians and Mona Lisas on the walls. The paintings exhilarated me, but what really turned me around was something I heard – Connie Francis singing 'V-A-C-A-T-I-O-N.' The music wasn't coming from a transistor Sony in the office, either. Into one of his paintings Wesselmann had built a real radio, and there in that art gallery it was tuned to WABC. What an epiphany. (2)

Wesselmann's inclusion of a real, functioning radio within his painting describes the impact of music on the rhetoric of cool at the simultaneous level of art and sound. What Christgau notices in Wesselmann's work is how mediums inform one another, how the

McLuhanist mosaic motivates expression so that various forms of discourse come together. Wesselmann's painting not only comments on the influential role of music distribution in post World War Two discourse, but includes an example of the electronic delivery system of popular music (the radio) to connect home life to mass media. The rhetoric of cool uses Christgau's observation to highlight an additional place where art and music juxtapose in the 1963 collage: the record covers of Blue Note Records.

Blue Note, one of the most prolific producers of jazz in the post war period, produced a number of record covers in 1963 distinct in their style: Freddie Roach's *Mo Greens Please*, Donald Byrd's *A New Perspective*, Jackie McLean's *One Step Beyond*, Hank Mobley's *No Room For Squares*, Blue Mitchell's *Step Lightly*, and Horace Silver's *Silver's Serenade*. Marked by geometric shapes and patterns, tilted angles and sharp re-colorations and shadings, these record covers, all designed by Reid Miles, revealed a new aesthetic for jazz and marketing, what Felix Cromey calls "an abstract design hinting at innovations, cool strides for cool notes, the symbolic implications of typeface and tones" (Marsh, Cromey, Callingham 7). In the tradition of cool rhetorical production (as seen in Beat writings and underground film, for instance), Miles' methods juxtaposed low financial budgets with innovations on previous forms. Speaking about Blue Notes' reaction to his work, Miles noted,

> Fifty bucks an album . . . they loved it, thought it was modern, they thought it went with the music. . .one or two colours to work with at that time and some outrageous graphics! (qtd in Marsh, Cromey, Callingham 72)

Blue Note's cover designs commutated the symbols of both urban and pop art culture into a cool aesthetic. In addition to the covers' usage of abstract shapes and angles

(a marker of pop art influence[4]), Reid's designs often troped the themes of '50s and '60s cool: sexy women, cars, and aloof posing. Hank Mobley's *No Room For Squares*, for instance, features Mobley demonstrating the cool look. Wearing dark sunglasses positioned in an indifferent stance, Mobley inhales non-chalantly on a cigarette, its long ash about to fall. His posture seems to repeat the album's title: there is no room for squares in this cool scene. The circle outline of a trumpet frames Mobley's posturing, merging instrument and personality into a form of identity formation where the musician is the music (along the lines of McLuhan's the medium is the message). Another example of Reid's work, Donald Byrd's *A New Perspective*, foregrounds the image of an automobile headlight directing immediate attention; the rest of the vehicle drifts back into the distance where Byrd stands cross-armed, cool, removed from everything but his car. Similar to the Mobley design, Byrd's identity is formed by the automobile, the urban-ideal media form[5] where utility gives way to aesthetic appeal. We no longer drive a car but become the car, technology and personality, user and design, merge. These designs encouraged listeners to consider the pleasure of music as inseparable from their daily relations with existing technologies. The McLuhan notion of technology as an extension of people informs, even if in a subtle way, the Blue Note designs. As Mina Hamilton and Malcolm Brookes indicated in a 1963 article on record packaging, early '60s technological innovations in design as well as in materials offered music production new inlays into consumer spending habits, and to which we might add, identify formation.

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[4] see the cover of Cecil Taylor's 1966 *Unit Structures*. An almost exact replication of Warhol's 1963 Marilyn paintings, rows of the same image in different silk screen colors.

[5] Following McLuhan's inclusion of the automobile as a media form in *Understanding Media*, I comment likewise.

"The package must carry some point-of-sale message to inform the prospective purchaser, or to attract him so that he becomes a prospective purchaser" (78). With Blue Note, I contend, that point was cool.

Indeed, not only do the designs of Blue Note offer cool the merger of music and art, but the jazz tunes recorded for these records have since provided some of the most sampled sounds for contemporary hip hop, a point proposed by music critic Craig Werner. "The most theoretically sophisticated understandings of the energies connecting the DJs, the deep soul singers, and the syndetic samplers came from the world of jazz" (336-337). The early '60s jazz sound performed by some of Blue Note's major stars like Horace Silver, Herbie Hancock, and Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers (of which Silver was once a member) created the genre of soul jazz. Soul jazz (or hard bop as it is also called) emphasized the self-proclaimed return to black cultural production. Paralleling the growing influence of the early '60s civil rights movement, soul jazz highlighted black culture's promise and positive social constructions, even if the markers it chose often bordered on the stereotypical. For example, Freddie Roach's *Mo Greens Please* record cover features Green ordering soul food, a prominent iconic display of African-American eating habits. Covers like Roach's used iconic display to stress black pride and power (choices in what African-Americans eat as opposed to what white-dominated advertising tells its audience to eat), topics which would eventually dominant the themes of hip hop albums recorded in the '80s and '90s by such groups as Public Enemy, A Tribe Called Quest, Digable Planets, and The Roots.

Regarding the music itself, Blue Note's artists eventually would provide hip hop with a considerable amount of material to be sampled. Herbie Hancock's "Cantaloupe

Island," (from his 1962 *Takin' Off* album) serves US3's cover version (the song is introduced through a sampled voice of an announcer declaring another hit "from Blue Note Records"). Digable Planets has mined Blue Note's early '60s releases for its two albums *Reachin' (A New Refutation of Time and Space)* and *Blowout Comb.* Like the members of the Native Tribes collective (A Tribe Called Quest, Jungle Brothers, and De La Soul), Digable Planets' choice of '60s jazz (such as Art Blakey, Herbie Hancock, and Sonny Rollins) informs the rhetoric of cool how the state of being "Cool Like Dat" (the title of the group's popular song from the *Reachin'* album) stems from recontextualizing past styles for new purposes. To be Cool like Dat is to sample, to appropriate and recontextualize. Butterfly, Digable Planets' lead singer, raps of a new form of identity, i.e. cool, determined by '60s rhythms in which music is "Pullin from the jazz stacks" as he sings in "Pacifics (NY is Red Hot)." The state of being Cool like Dat is fully explored in the song of the same name:

> 'Cuz funk's made fat from right beneath my hoodie
> The puba of the styles like Miles and shit
> Like sixties funky worms with waves and perms
> Just sendin' junkie rhythms right down your block
> We be to rap what key be to lock
> But I'm cool like dat. ("Cool Like Dat")

To be Cool like Dat also means remixing Blue Note's more current productions as DJ Smash (Smash Hunter) does on *Phonography*. Not only a remix of contemporary Blue Note artists like Medeski, Martin, and Wood and Cassandra Wilson, but released on the Blue Note label as well, *Phonography* proposes the remix as both a nostalgic glance towards the past and a contemporary challenge to song construction. All compositions are remixes, DJ Smash's work suggests.

The return of '60s jazz to contemporary music updates Baraka's claim that soul jazz marks the moment when cool transforms into social activity. In his definition of the move from cool to soul, Baraka claims

> The step from cool to soul is a form of social aggression. It is an attempt to place upon a meaningless social order, an order which would give value to terms of existence that were once considered not only valueless but shameful. Cool meant non participation; soul means a "new" establishment. It is an attempt to reverse the social roles within the society by redefining the canons of value. (*Blues People* 219)

Mark Anthony Neal describes '60s jazz performers as infusing the soul sounds of the early '60s into their compositions. Doing so, these musicians appropriated one facet of black musical production for their own purposes. One such influence and place of appropriation, Neal contends, was the music of James Brown. "These artists would infuse jazz with the syncopated rhythms often associated with the music of James Brown and introduce a new subgenre of jazz, with an emphasis on catching the attention of a younger, politically motivated, culturally assured audience raised on the music and production techniques of the Motown and Stax recording companies" (33).

James Brown enters my collage through the jazz connection but also through his own recordings of the same year. In 1963, Brown released *Live at the Apollo Vol. I.* Recorded the previous year at the famous Apollo theater in Harlem, Brown's album became the first soul record to significantly chart on the white-dominated Billboard sales charts. Brown's entrance into the segregated music divisions of popular music (rhythm and blues for African-Americans, pop music for whites) strengthens Baraka's observation. The new establishment Baraka describes as soul music meant an entrance of black music into the homes of white America. *Live at the Apollo* also created an iconic

identification of African-American cultural production through the cross-over celebrity, one that would quickly identify black musical production with social concerns and values. Baraka writes:

> James Brown's form and content identify an entire group of people in America. However these may be transmuted and reused, reappear in other areas, in other musics for different purposes in the society, the initial energy and image are about a specific grouping of people, Black People. (*Black Music* 185)

With Brown, cultural transformation manifests by way of song writing. The early love songs on *Live At The Apollo* eventually become manifestos for black empowerment when juxtaposed with Brown's late '60s work. *Live At The Apollo's* "Please, Please, Please" and "Try Me" read in the light of '60s Black Power become entreaties for equal rights and self-awareness. They become the building blocks of later hits like "Say It Loud - I'm Black And I'm Proud Pt. 1," "Soul Power," and "I Don't Want Nobody To Give Me Nothing (Open Up The Door I'll Get It Myself)."

This aspect of *Live at the Apollo* demonstrates an additional importance to the rhetoric of cool at the level of black cultural production and subject identity formation in the jazz/soul split in 1963. Brown's choice of the Apollo for his breakthrough recording mirrors the theater's long standing conflict with both soul and jazz music and demonstrates the larger social divide between whites and blacks. Brian Ward illustrates this split, stating, "White-owned recording companies – Blue Note, Prestige, Impulse, Fantasy, Atlantic – recorded most of the New Music; whites owned most of the clubs in which it was performed, and most of the journals which helped to create a hip mystique around the new jazzmen" (410). And as Ward notes, in the early '60s whites catered more to jazz than blacks; in New York City, the clubs of Greenwich village were most

likely to be attended by whites, while the Apollo would most likely be patronized by blacks. The dichotomy of aesthetic taste and musical sponsorship holds up today and is best reflected in hip hop. For, in addition to Blue Note's recordings, hip hop has sampled James Brown's musical catalogue more than almost any other performer.[6] Accordingly, hip hop as contemporary place of cool, musical production is an updated merger of the '63 performances in the Apollo and jazz clubs of New York City.

### Hip Hop – Samplin' and Skratchin'

Without entering into a history of hip hop,[7] I include the genre in my 1963 collage by way of sampling and how it has been informed by both Blue Note and James Brown. Sampling is an electronic process of preserving bits and pieces of sounds from previously recorded material in a computer's memory.

> The sampler is a digital record box; it digitizes sounds and makes the storage of sounds and notes a simple-matter: a sound is recorded, and can then be repeatedly re-used and modified. The sample consists of an analogue/digital converter, a memory and a digital/analogue converter, which makes the digitized form of the sounds audible again. By transforming sounds into digital form, they can be manipulated and reworked. (Poschardt 230)

Samples, as Tricia Rose points out in *Black Noise*, are used as "a point of reference, as a means by which the process of repetition and recontextualization can be highlighted and privileged" (73). Sampling offers cool an additional rhetorical strategy. For Geneva Smitherman, "as a rhetorical strategy, sampling is a kind of structural signifyin, similar to what Henry Louis Gates and others have shown." According to Smitherman, sampling

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[6] Possibly, only George Clinton's two bands Funkadelic and Parliament are sampled as much as Brown.

[7] See Tricia Rose's *Black Noise*, Nelson George's *Hip Hop America*, David Toop's *Rap Attack* for comprehensive histories of hip hop music and culture.

provides commentary "on the work of earlier Black writers within the narrative structure of [samplers'] own literary production" ("The Chain Remain the Same" 14).

Sampling also disputes notions of authenticity and authorship in musical production by shifting focus away from individual musicians. Much like the filmmakers of the early '60s I discussed earlier in this chapter, digital samples challenge and reshape the role of the author dominant in the history of popular music. Music theorist Simon Frith has noted the importance of authorship to rock music as an organizing principle. "The rock auteur (who may be writer, singer, instrumentalist, band, record producer, or even engineer) creates the music; everyone else engaged in record-making is simply part of the means of communication" (53). In digital sampling, no single figure stands out. The mixer, the electronic device used to juxtapose disparate sounds, determines production. Authorship moves to the machine, fulfilling McLuhan's prophecy that technology is an extension of people. As Ulf Poschardt claims, "The remixer isn't concerned with salvaging authenticity, but with creating a new authenticity" (34).

The composer of this new composition process, what Tricia Rose calls "post-literate composition," is the DJ, the disk jockey. Disc Jockeys' influence on musical production begins long before 1963. My collage, however, draws upon the 1963 DJ, by beginning with the TV show *American Bandstand*, a televised dance show run by 1950s DJ Dick Clark, in order to pinpoint a specific role of the DJ in the rhetoric of cool. "Broadcast nationally between 1957-1963, *Bandstand* was unsurpassed as a promotional medium until the rise of MTV in the mid-eighties" (Brewster and Broughton 49). Until 1963, Clark's *Bandstand* functioned as a promotional tool for record companies. Geared largely towards a teenage audience, *Bandstand* provided record companies with instant

marketing. For cool, Clark demonstrated the way to tie youth culture and artistic output to consumerism.[8] Unlike contemporary DJs, Clark didn't mix records; he merely played selective songs, one after the other. *Bandstand's* demise in 1963, then, serves my project as a symbolic end of uncomplicated DJ methods (placing the record on the turntable) and offers an introduction, by way of heavily sampled James Brown and Blue Note selections, of the manipulation of sound. After Clark, the role of the DJ begins to alter to that of collector and compiler. As early 1960s experimentation in musical production replaces the Dick Clarks of DJing, the DJ becomes a sampler. One of the first moments in sampling comes from Terry Riley's 1963 composition "Music for The Gift," written for Ken Dewey's play *The Gift*. After recording Chet Baker's band covering Miles Davis' "So What" in group and individual sessions, Riley then rearranged the recordings by extending the actual tape across both the play head and record head of two separate tape recorders. The end result created a continues loop and, in return, the invention of the looping process, a contemporary DJ practice for cutting and pasting old sounds into new compositions.

The DJ as sampler updates Walter Benjamin's *flaneur*. Benjamin described the *flaneur* as the inheritor of a new poetics in which the cultural artifact guides the composition process. The *flaneur*, Benjamin wrote, acts as a collector. The *flaneur's* writings stem from his collected findings, which, Benjamin writes, come from the elements of the Parisian Arcade. Collections, in turn, become juxtaposed and recontextualized in order to evoke alternative understandings of cultural history. "The

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[8] Douglas Rushkoff has updated Clark's financial dealings with popular music by focusing on MTV's current relationship with Sprite and the ways the two companies promote popular performance artists jointly. See Rushkoff's documentary *The Merchants of Cool*.

collector was the true inhabitant of the interior" (*Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* 168), Benjamin claimed. Benjamin felt that the "poets find their refuse on the street" (*Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* 79) preempting William Gibson's now often cited remark, "the street finds its own use for things" ("Burning Chrome" 186), and the contemporary DJ. Early DJs of the 1970s and '80s like Grandmaster Flash and Afrika Bambaataa built record collections from bargain street sales. These record collections served as memory machines for their musical compositions, a point stressed by Kodwo Eshun. "Your record collection now becomes an ongoing memory bank in which every historical sound exists as a potential break in the present tense" (Eshun 20). S.H. Fernando Jr. writes about Bambaataa's introduction to hip hop as a *flaneurist*-like experience, describing how Bambaataa's mother's record collection influenced the young artist's own roaming for new items to gather:

> She had already bestowed upon him a love of music and a record collection that ran the gamut from James Brown and Sly Stone to Miriam Makeba and Fela Kuti, from the Who and Led Zeppelin to Latin soul and calypso. Bam [Bambaataa] picked up from there, scouring furniture stores in the Bronx and used record stores in Greenwich Village for obscure vinyl to play on his set. (18)

DJs like Bambaataa isolated sounds and tracks from their collections, remixing them into new compositions. "A lot of what I do is acting like a refraction point of my record collection," DJ Spooky states. "I collect all sorts of stuff" ("Watch That Man: The Many Phases of Paul D. Miller"). In the '63 collage, Burroughs' Subliminal Kid is the *flaneur* as street music collector.

> "The Subliminal Kid" moved in and took over bars cafés and juke boxes of the world cities and installed radio transmitters and microphones in each bar so that the music and talk of any bar could be heard in all his bars and he had tape records in each bar that played and recorded at arbitrary

> intervals and his agents moved back and forth with portable tape recorders
> and brought back street sound and talk and music and poured it into his
> recorder array so he set waves and eddies and tornadoes of sound down all
> your streets and by the river of all language. (*Nova Express* 147)

With the introduction of the digital sampler, the computer controls how such a

Burroughsian sound system becomes manipulated.

> A recording device that captures sound as digital information, which is
> then saved in computer memory instead of on magnetic tape, the sampler
> made it possible to create intricate soundscapes with virtually any source
> material, including already recorded music and live instruments.
> (McElfresh 170)

This transfer of sound from instrument mastery to computer skill re-inscribes the

cut and paste methodology of digital culture onto the rhetoric of cool. In addition, while

these early performers cut and pasted past sounds into new compositions, they also

reinforced Baraka's notion of cool as identity formation. Even though Baraka understood

cool as non-involvement, these artists cut the word cool out of its 1963 context and re-

pasted it unto their own names, creating a new sense of personal involvement in

composition. The DJ adapted cool as writing style and persona. Cool became a moniker

for Kool Herc, Kool Moe D, DJ Kool, L.L Cool J, Coolio, and the grandfather of DJing,

Grandmaster Flash, best known for the line from Blondie's hit "Rapture": "Flash is Fast,

Flash is cool."

### The Breaks

Samples are determined by breaks, a DJ method involving "any short captured

sound whatsoever" (Eshun 14). The break motivates digital sampling; it provides the

points from which samplers appropriate past works into their own. "Break beats are

points of rupture in their former contexts, points at which the thematic elements of a

musical piece are suspended and the underlying rhythms brought center stage. In the early stages of rap, these break beats formed the core of rap DJs' mixing strategies" (Rose 73-74). Breaks are determined by how DJs produce cuts in previously recorded music. "The cut is a command, a technical and conceptual operation which cuts the lines of association" (Eshun 16). The cut provides me with a link between Burroughs and the DJ, for Burroughs teaches the rhetoric of cool to utilize cuts in order to create readerly shock. In Burroughs' work, cuts operate as tools for destroying ideology. "Once machine lines are cut, the enemy is helpless" (*Ticket That Exploded* 111), Burroughs instructs. In *Nova Express*, Burroughs issues the command, "Cut word lines" (62). And in *Naked Lunch*, as I note in Chapter Two, the cut provides a set of reading instructions, a way for readers to uncover Burroughs' own ideological positions.

> You can cut into *Naked Lunch* at any intersection point . . . I have written many prefaces. . . *Naked Lunch* is a blueprint, a How-To Book. (*Naked Lunch* 224)

The cut supports the inclusion of James Brown into the collage, a point emphasized by James Snead who remarks that "James Brown is an example of a brilliant American practitioner of the 'cut' whose skill is readily admired by African as well as American musicians" (Snead 69). Snead reminds my collage how Brown's usage of the cut created a new grammar for African-American popular music, one insisting on the "repetitive nature of the music, by abruptly skipping it back to another beginning which we have already heard" (Snead 69). Brown's heavily repeated style, cutting to previous played riffs, has since become a style indicative of digital sampling. Dominant in his later recordings like "Cold Sweat" and "Hot Pants," Brown's repetitive cuts of chords and lyrics in *Live At the Apollo's* "Think" and "Please, Please, Please," are indicative of this

rhetorical move. The cut, in turn, creates an alternative grammar directed by pattern formation.

Eshun states that "Cutting disorganizes syntax" (Eshun 20). Exemplified in Burroughs' cut-up or Smith and Anger's films, as patterns are created, musical grammar breaks down and is recomposed anew. The cut functions as another strategy for cool writing. David Toop stresses the point in his discussion of the cut as the basis for a new practice based on appropriation and repetition, a practice he defines appropriately as the break, adding, "The break took it to the bridge, to paraphrase James Brown."

> This appropriated music [hip hop] was then edited on record turntables in real time, in order to eliminate the verse, chorus, verse, bridge structure of popular song, leaving only repetitions of an internally complex percussive cell, a fragment and memory trace of the history of a track known as the break. ("Hip Hop Iron Needles of Death and a Piece of Wax" 92)

At its most extreme state, breaks commutate into scratching, a method of playing the record itself as opposed to the pre-recorded music preserved on the record. Toops writes, "Turntable scratching is a means of gouging quick, semi-identifiable traces of music from the grooves of a record and transmuting these electronically transmitted traces into furred and splintered drum noise" ("Hip Hop Iron Needles of Death and a Piece of Wax" 96). Playing records as if the turntable were an instrument fits into my collage via a 1963 RCA advertisement for its high fidelity record Dynagroove. "The greatest advance recording since the L.P.!" the ad promises. "It completely eliminates false movements of the stylus the first time your phonograph needle moves in a true dynamic." RCA's advertisement for a new system of grooves within the LP record can be thought of as an early moment for both industry and consumers to think of records as technology and not mere consumer product. Suddenly, the record displays itself as a

musical instrument disposed to technological innovations. This moment extends into the practice of scratching. Scratching, like the Dynagroove advertisement, asks that consumers reconsider the role the record as everyday object plays in a technology-driven society. Scratching belongs to the hip hop tradition of appropriating the everyday for new purposes. Early hip hop DJs like Grandmaster Flash and DJ Theodore introduced scratching as an alternative musical form to the traditional mastery of an instrument. Often, scratching is referred to as turntablism or skratchadelia.

> With Flash, the dj becomes an initiate, inducted into a Microsonic Science which converts voices into new rhythm effects – in '93, Breakbeat wizard Droppin' Science, then known as Sonz of a Loop da Loop era, terms this "skratchadelia." Hip Hop's admirers always applaud skratchadelia for its percussive qualities. But this is both lazy and vague. To scratch is to evolve the turntables into a tone generator, a defamiliarizer, a word-molecularizer. Skratchadelia isn't a rhythm so much as its wreckage made rhythmic. (Eshun 15)

The importance of skratchadelia to cool is in the medium's ability to commutate musical codes. Within the 1963 collage, this activity can further be identified with pioneer DJ Murray the K. A one time popular DJ of the 1950s, Murray the K found renewed fame as he followed the Beatles around on their 1964 North American tour. New Journalist Tom Wolfe became intrigued with the DJ's wild antics, describing him as "the original hysterical disk jockey":

> Murray the K doesn't operate on Aristotelian logic. He operates on symbolic logic. He builds up an atmosphere of breathless jollification, comic hysteria, and turns it up to a pitch so high it can hypnotize kids and keep them frozen. (Wolfe 34)

Murray the K's DJing worked from a symbolic logic of appropriation: sampled sounds, bits and pieces of eccentric outtakes used as vehicles to move from song to song.

Updated in skratchadelia, the bits and pieces no longer derive from car horns or glass breaking (Murray the K's method) but from either past music or the record itself.

## Be the Machine

In sampling and skratching, the machine and rhetoric juxtapose, information technology informing rhetorical style. In contemporary sampling, Pioneer's 1200 and CDJ-1000 digital samplers transform the power of turntablism from analog to digital form. Although they are computers, these machines come with an additional vinyl mode, suggesting that the old ideology of music distribution remains intact. The so-called authentic model of the vinyl record is preserved in electronic form. Part nostalgia (a longing for the authentic means of playing music, the record player captured in the vinyl mode) and part simulation (it's not really a record player, but an extension of the computer), Baudrillard's cool aptly describes Pioneer's sampler; one can commutate the vinyl record into an electronic series of codes in order to fashion the composition. "Sampled sounds are nothing but numerical codes," Ulf Poschardt writes (230). Yet those codes grant users the impression and experience of playing actual vinyl. Pioneer's promotion for the CDJ-1000 reads as follows:

> Introducing the CDJ-1000, the art of turntablism in the digital domain. Powering down, scratching, or doing a backspin, It's all possible with the CDJ-1000. featuring the world's largest touch sensitive jog dial, the CDJ-1000 allows you to treat a CD the same way you'd treat a vinyl record. Breakthrough, yes. A must-have, absolutely. The CDJ-1000, welcome to the future.[9]

Pioneer proposes a rhetoric of technology imbedded in musical production. We are welcomed into the future by way of the ideology of the past, turntable logic, record

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[9] From Pioneer's website: http://www.pioneerprodj.com/products/cdj1000/cdj1000.htm

spinning in the ear of compact discs. Turntable logic, as Eshun demonstrates through the example of pioneer turntablist Grandmaster Flash, is a state of mind.

> In mythifying the decks as the "Wheels of Steel," Flash inaugurates the machine mythology of the turntable. This new conceptual technology or *conceptechnics* presupposes that the decks have become a state of mind for the dj. After Flash, the turntable becomes a machine for building and melding mindstates from your record collection. (Eshun 14)

Robert Moog suggested likewise when he developed the Moog synthesizer in 1964, the first mass-produced device designed to transform music into pure electronic composing. Upon meeting future collaborator Herb Deutsch at the 1963 New York State School Music Association's Convention at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, Moog proposed a portable, battery-operated amplifier kit as prototype for a device capable of synthesizing music. In partnership, Moog and Deutsch used the piano keyboard as the basis for this new creation, an old medium reconfigured for a new purpose - playing back pre-recorded music in new ways. David Toops writes, "In October 1964, Robert Moog and Herb Deutsch exhibited the first hand-made Moog synthesizer modules, the sounds of which would be transformed a few years later by Sun Ra into astro-blackness, a sea of sounds, the energy of distant winds, the lyric initiative of electricity, new worlds on earth" (*Oceans of Sound* 88). Monstrous in size, the initial Moog model followed the 1963 production of the Mark I Mellotron, often cited as the first real sampler. Like the Moog, the 350 lb Mellotron used the piano metaphor for its physical appearance and was capable of altering electronic sound. Only, the Mellotron came with eighteen  prerecorded rhythms and eighteen different instrumental sounds. Constructed out of seventy tape machines, the Mellotron could play back the prerecorded

rhythms and instruments in a number of ways, a precursor to devices like the Pioneer machines.

In my collage, the Moog and the Mellotron join the modern digital sampler in the music of turntablists like Mixmaster Mike, one-time member of the Invisibl Skratch Piklz. The Piklz (comprised of Mixmaster Mike, Shortkut, Yogafrog, and Q-Bert, also known as ISP, thus evoking a pun with a similar acronym for Internet Service Provider), turn musical convention on its head through such tracks as "Skratch Language," "I've Got That Itchy Feeling," and "Bulletproof Scratch Language." Like other hip hop samplers, The Piklz reconfigure the role of the composer, suggesting that writing has morphed into machine mastery. The Piklz often sound like an updated version of Marinetti's call for a modern, machine language, a body and tool cyborgian grammar. The Piklz's energetic and quick-paced turntablism morphs wrist action (actual skratching) with the record itself. Mixmaster Mike's solo work, on the other hand, incorporates looped samples of voice and music recordings juxtaposed with the rhythmic skratching of the turntable. Like Anger's *Scorpio Rising*, Mixmaster Mike's *Anti-Theft Device* fashions patterns within each song so that the composition is not based on patterns but is the pattern. "Il Shit," for example, loops a consistent drum line with the repetitive chanting of "Mixmaster Mike," a line from Public Enemy (the song's title) and a sample of the film *Austin Powers*: "Welcome to my underground lair." Consequently, Mixmaster Mike embodies Toop's understanding of scratching. "Scratching also represents a virtuosity of the imagination, a device for simultaneously disrupting and maintaining hip hop's peculiarly retro vision of a now constructed from slivers of the past" ("Hip Hop Iron Needles of Death and a Piece of Wax" 99).

Performers like these introduce into contemporary composition new definitions of what writing entails. While skratching may appear to be noise to novice listeners, in fact, it offers the rhetoric of cool additional insight into electronic literacy. Indeed, the Piklz propose skratch as a new literacy. In "Skratch Language," Shortkut states: "DJ Cube and DJ Dis are going to talk to us in Skratch Language." The implication is we are hearing a new literate language. Skratch as literacy has been considered further, as Bruno Franklin writes, by DJ Radar's (Jason Grossfeld) efforts to develop a scratch notation system for turntablists so that they can repeat past performances the way traditional musicians read music in order to play others' work. As Franklin states:

> It's this emphasis on speed and skill that has made the move to notation almost inevitable. As the scratch repertoire has expanded, so has the nomenclature that practitioners use to communicate with one another. There are "chirps," the high, birdlike skratches pioneered by Will Smith's pre-Hollywood partner DJ Jazzy Jeff; "flares" (named for their inventor) and "orbits," sub-categorized by number of quick cross-fader cuts or "clicks" per push or drag of the record; "crabs," Q-Bert's secret weapon, involving a many-fingered fader movement -- to say nothing of "tears," "transforms," "combos" of all of the above, and two-handed techniques ("phasers," "lasers," "hydroplane"), successively more difficult both to execute, to describe in prose or conversation. (Franklin)

In this sense, skratching produces a technology-based literacy the rhetoric of cool draws upon. Skratching works towards a new apparatus for composition production: writing with the apparatus and not just within it.

## Musical Production

Sampling returns cool to questions of the apparatus. In cool, sampling engages in cultural resistance in the way Friedrich Kittler contends all popular music does: "it maximizes all electro-acoustic possibilities, occupies recording studios and FM transmitters, and uses tape montages to subvert the writing-induced separation into

composers and writers, arrangers, and interpreters" (Kittler 111). In particular, sampling teaches the rhetoric of cool how minority discursive groups respond to dominant orders and industry control. The early DJs who popularized sampling tended to be young, African-American youth shut out from the mainstream production facilities of major record labels due to their race or class.[10] Lacking the financial means to book studio recording time, these DJs found themselves unable to participate in the creation and distribution of mass media. Writing in 1963, African-American journalist Simeon Booker questioned overall African-American access to the communication industry.

> For too long, Negroes have known and grown to accept news managing of their affairs, attitudes and selection of leaders by most of the communications industry. And for too long, the industry has not recognized Negroes as even a part of the community, locally or nationally, except as an undesirable part. (143)

Booker wanted a "Negro press" to provide its own telecommunication services, a request since elaborated upon by Public Enemy front man Chuck D's (Carlton Ridenhour) insistence that hip hop is black America's CNN. For Chuck D, however, questions of black representation in the media remain complex as the distribution outlets for hip hop music (radio stations, record companies, and video music channels like MTV or Black Entertainment Television, which is today owned by MTV's Viacom) continue the problems Booker addressed in 1963. "The bottom line in all of this is that the pied piper of our culture now is the radio stations that play those same 'black voices' and the national video outlets that depict these unbalanced images" ("Chuck D Speaks Out About Urban Media"). In the tradition of 1963 resistance practices, Chuck D proposes Radio

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[10] I am referring to the pioneers of DJing like Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash. Later DJs and hip hop groups are a mix of middle to upper class, often college educated youth and inner city residents.

Attack Terrorists (R.A.T.)[11] to combat the institutional control of hip hop music through an information technology war of words, an idea akin to William Gibson's remark that "terrorism as we ordinarily understand it is innately media related" (*Neuromancer* 58). As in his work with Public Enemy, Chuck D argues that music be used as a weapon. "[Public Enemy's] role is to sharpen the scratch into a cutting device, until it incites an edge of panic. The dj therefore now becomes a Track Attacker on lead scratch, an Assault Technician who reorganizes the sound of Trad tonalities" (Eshun 18).

Outlining his plans for R.A.T., Chuck D puns corporate names as a means of exposure, as a decoding of mass media organizations portrayed as black empowered when they're not. UPN becomes United Plantation of Niggers; the Warner Brothers Network (WB) earns the new name We Buffoonin Network. On the group's web site,[12] discussion centers on "enlisting" members to counter corporate media influence in hip hop music through the media's own tools. The site's message board boasts such topics as "Information War," "Massive Action," and "Intellectual Combat." Chuck D describes R.A.T.'s purpose as follows:

> More than censoring art, we have a concern to fight for hip hop and neo-soul music that needs to be heard by the masses ...for the good of the people instead of at the people's expense. Our goal is to target the so called urban airwaves, as well as television waves to provide positive balance for the images that have been negatively one dimensional caricatures for the sake of big corporate business. To simply post up beefs about one sided portrayals to the community at hand and youth, plus identify every music and program director, owner and television hierarchy responsible for this and hold them personally accountable for these actions. This is psychological warfare to counter the same misuses of HIP HOP, RAP and young minds. ("Welcome to R.A.T.")

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[11] An anticipated pun here connects Chuck D's Radio Attack Terrorists with skratching's "terrorwrists," those performers who use wrist action, spinning the record, to critique cultural notions.

[12] http://www.radioattackterrorists.com/

R.A.T.'s offshoots include small, independently run listservs and websites like Beats, Rhymes, and Life[13] and Tales From the Real.[14] On Beats, Rhymes, and Life, the list's owner, who calls himself "Web," preaches a self-directed hip hop free of corporate control, sounding very much like William Burroughs' attacks in *Yage Letters* and *Nova Express*.

> Take the approach that YOU are the label and YOU control your destiny. Second, be original! Contrary to popular belief, the goal of sampling is to create an entirely new song assembled such that you barely recognized the original. (Web)

For writers like music journalist Peter Shapiro, the anti-corporate stance implicit in much of hip hop music exists in the mixtapes which circulate in the neighborhoods of cities like New York. Shapiro describes their effect on musical control as a Burroughs-like virus which threatens corporate control.

> Resolutely underground and self-distributed, mixtapes are the ideal carriers of the HipHop virus: the samples aren't cleared, and the hiss, clicks and distortion of the cassette only add to the character of the cuts. Since HipHop [sic] mixtapes rarely have track listings, and circulate in an obfuscating culture where knowledge is transmitted only in code, they are the perfect expression of the ultimate trainspotter genre whose origins lie deep in the record crates of such legendary breakbeat archivists as DJ Herc and Grandmaster Flash. ("Mixed Medium")

Such attitudes belong within the 1963 collage's emphasis on reform and resistance. Within the collage, these voices resonate in Bob Dylan's 1963 *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*. Best known for producing the folk classic "Blowin in the Wind," the album also introduced listeners to Dylan's vision of a post World War II world overindulged in war,

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[13] http://beatsrhymeslife.listbot.com/

[14] http://talesfromthereal.com/

commercialism, and information technology. The song's promise of a "hard rain" is as apocalyptic as Public Enemy's later "Countdown to Armageddon" and "Welcome to the Terrordome" and as uncommercial as the mixtapes in circulation today. Dylan's song asks that power be quickly redirected if a hard rain is to be prevented.

> Oh, what did you see, my blue-eyed son?
> Oh, what did you see, my darling young one?
> I saw a newborn baby with wild wolves all around it
> I saw a highway of diamonds with nobody on it,
> I saw a black branch with blood that kept drippin',
> I saw a room full of men with their hammers a-bleedin',
> I saw a white ladder all covered with water,
> I saw ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken,
> I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children,
> And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard,
> And it's a hard rain's a-gonna fall. (Dylan)

Tricia Rose places hip hop in a similar context, claiming that "Rap music is a contemporary stage for the theater of the powerless" (Rose 101). As I noted in Chapter Two regarding William Burroughs' work, power, in this case, comes from the remnants of consumer culture, the by-products of a capitalist-driven information industry directing American culture. Like Burroughs, DJs engage in appropriation in order to reclaim power from controlling interests. The sample, what appears at first to be nothing more than a mere snippet of sound, provides DJs with appropriated tools of resistance because its origins are with the major studios, the power brokers.

> Rappers are constantly taking dominant discursive fragments and throwing them into relief, destabilizing hegemonic discourses and attempting to legitimate counterhegemonic interpretations. (Rose 102)

In a discussion of techno music, Ben Williams extends Rose's claim regarding black music's role in the contemporary political and economic arena by arguing that in the digital realm race itself commutates into a production force.

"Blackness" becomes production technique; alienation is converted into cyborg identity; and the practice of international musical data exchange becomes a utopian myth of nonproperty-based "open source" collaboration that functions as a resolution to the contradictions and inequities of global electronic capitalism. (Williams 171)

Identity formation, therefore, confronts the economic and social apparatus through appropriative acts. Chuck D's proclamation in "Caught, Can We Get A Witness!"

They say that I stole this
I rebel with a raised fist, can we get a witness?

addresses the open-ended question of ownership in digital culture by refocusing it as a social practice in which the sample leads to rebellion. The relationship between self-identification and entertainment production relies on the user seeing him/herself within the process of both alienation and resistance. When the composition process changes so that composing creates identity, we no longer sample but become samplers, active critics of the information economy. As Kodwo Eshun makes clear,

Grand Wizard Theodore, DJ Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash are human samplers who isolate the Breakbeat by cutting right into their funkengine, discarding The Song, ignoring intention and tradition to capture its motion: the charge and pull of the beat and the bass, the gait motorized by the deck's direct drive. (17)

"The mix gets inside us," Erik Davis proclaims, "and changes the way the world arises before us" (Davis). The most obvious references here are the identity-labels of the MC and DJ which preempt one's name (DJ Kool, DJ Kool Herc, etc) and when the action engaged with absorbs one's name (as in rap singers and DJs Busta Rhymes, Cut Chemist, and Method Man). In this sense, we, as much as the writing, are the sample machines.

The continuing McLuhan mantra, technology becomes an extension of people, dominants.

## The Return of Nostalgia

While a great deal of cultural studies attention towards musical production indicates the places where minority discourse appropriates and recontextualizes the meanings of institutional concerns,[15] in the rhetoric of cool, hip hop alters this understanding somewhat by shifting the focus to nostalgia. In hip hop (as in other parts of the 1963 collage), nostalgia plays an influential role in the formation of both the musical composition and the critical stance employed in such work. Just as new musical tools like the sampler offer an ideology of nostalgia (an electronic turntable built into the computer, for instance), much of African-American response to the dominant control of music depends on past reverence, a point emphasized by David Toop. "The paradox of hip-hop's dedications to constant change is its unchanging allegiance to the past: looking back at 'the good old days' of its own history; paying homage to the archive of musical history through sample loop montage (the majority of samples now declared, cleared, and pad for in obeisance to copyright law), turntable cutting, and scratching" ("Hip Hop. Iron Needles of Death and A Piece of Wax" 100). Breaks shape sampling at levels previously discussed in Burroughs and film, but also remind cool of Kerouac's nostalgia, particularly how breaks and cuts rely upon iconic placement. Sampling is, after all, a nostalgic practice, a return to past stylistics and sounds, what music critic Greg Tate refers to as an African-American survival mechanism.

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[15] See Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Andre Ross and Tricia Rose's *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music & Youth Culture*, and Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin's *On Record: Rock, Pop, and The Written Word* for further examples.

Ironically, one of the things that's allowed black culture to survive is its ability to operate in an iconoclastic way in regard to the past; the trappings of tradition are never allowed to stand in the way of innovation and improvisation. You have to remember, too, that black reverence for the past is a reverence for a paradise lost. ("Black to the Future" 767)

In addition to James Brown and Blue Note's jazz productions, digital sampling's favorite choices for material have been, George Clinton's Funkadelic and Parliament, TV shows of the '60s and '70s, cartoons, and kung fu movies. The rich complexity of popular culture past grants sampling an abundance of material. Sampling choices, however, are motivated by emotion as much as by rhythmic placement. Choosing a Miles Davis sound or a speech by Malcolm X for inclusion in a song is the result of nostalgic emotional responses. When those moments arrive from periods directly associated with the rise of African-American self awareness (like the early '60s Civil Rights movement or late '60s and early '70s Black Power movement), nostalgia motivates composition. Such responses, Jeffrey Louis Decker claims, belong to a larger movement to recontextualize African-American culture within an imperialist history, one which, via institutionalized oppression, has denied African-Americans a glorious past. "Hip hop nationalism nostalgically looks toward ancient Egypt as the African American motherland while it simultaneously imagines an alternative future based on the rise of the anticipated black nation" (Decker 100).

The challenge to sampling, and in return, to cool, is to convert nostalgia into critique. I will elaborate on this further in Chapter Four when I discuss composition at greater length, but as I suggested as well in Chapter Two, the terms of critique shift within the rhetoric of cool. Following McLuhan's dictum that the new doesn't replace the old but builds upon it, the old forms of critique as argument dominant in composition

studies do not disappear. Such forms include usage of logic and reason (logos) as structuring principles or utilization of the popular Toulmin method[16] whose elements include the enthymeme, the claim, the qualifier, the warrant, support, and condition for rebuttal or response. Instead, these elements become altered and built upon within the cut and paste model of digital sampling. Argument revolves less around the ability to fulfill Toulmin's slots and more around the manipulation of an iconic past. The icons of the past become the places of contemporary critique as in Public Enemy's "Fight the Power":

> Elvis was a hero to most
> But he never meant shit to me you see
> Straight up racist that sucker was
> Simple and plain
> Mother fuck him and John Wayne. ("Fight the Power")

Elvis and John Wayne are recognizable iconic figures in American popular culture. Public Enemy manipulates their status as heroic or innovative in order to expose an alternative representation these figures carry, notably, how their representations among African-Americans differ from that of the dominant, white establishment which produced them. We see such critiques elsewhere: the use of Queen's "Flash Gordon" to introduce Public Enemy's "Terminator X To The Edge of Panic." The sample is then pasted to other '70s songs to create a critique of racism in the music business. Public Enemy's usage of "Flash Gordon" echoes Grandmaster Flash's "Wheels of Steel," which samples the original Flash Gordon serial, among a number of other songs and sounds, to critique copyright. "With Chic's "Good Times" supplying the main beat, Flash manages to mix into this central rhythm the Sugarhill Gang's '8th Wonder,' Flash and the Five's

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[16] See Stephen Toulmin *The Uses of Argument.*

'Birthday Party,' Spoonie Gee's 'Monster Jam,' Queen's 'Another One Bites the Dust,' Blondie's 'Rapture,' the narrated title of Flash Gordon (without the 'Gordon,' i.e.,. 'The official adventures of. . .Flash'), and other assorted spoken words" (Boyer 7). Again, we see the practice in Public Enemy's "Night of the Living Baseheads," which begins with Martin Luther King reminding an audience how African-American slaves were robbed of their names upon arrival in America, moves to snippets of early hip hop in the '80s, includes a break from the Temptations "I Can't Get Next to You" among other samples from James Brown and David Bowie to critique drug usage.

These practices continue to challenge the basis of the apparatus. They redefine our relationship to past production, questioning the role corporate production plays in combining aesthetic taste and emotional response with notions of copyright and ownership. In "Art for Nothing," a short piece in his 1963 collection of essays, *An ABC of Color*, W.E.B. Du Boise complained that appropriative acts regarding black cultural production pose a threat to African-American Culture. "There is a deep feeling among many people and particularly among colored people that Art should not be paid for," Du Boise wrote in an assault on such ideas (122). For Du Boise, racist practices prior to and just succeeding World War II denied black artists the rights to their own cultural production. In contrast to Du Boise, hip hop artists endorse an open source styled movement, one that doesn't prevent them from receiving compensation for their work, but that simultaneously ignores the copyright system put into effect by white industry. In fact, Rose suggests that sampling provides a sense or revenge in some cases for the years of neglectful business practices that deprived black artists their share of profit.

> Maybe rap music represents the real "big payback." By defining music in such a way as to obscure black contributions and achievements, the music industry and the legal system have rendered current measurement of black rhythm, intonation, and timbre −for their profit − virtually inaccessible. They very laws that justified and aided in the theft from and denigration of an older generation of black artists have created a profitable, legal loophole and a relatively free-play zone for today's black artists. (Rose 93)

Russell Potter concurs, arguing that hip hop is not just a critique of capitalism but that it takes up capitalism's gaps and contradictions in order to create a new economical situation, one guided by appropriation (111). The critique is intertwined within the process of sampling. Returning again to Public Enemy's "Caught, Can We Get a Witness!" we hear the claim:

> Mail from the courts and jail
> Claims I stole the beats that I rail
> Look at how I'm livin' like
> And they're gonna check the mike right? – Sike
>
> They say that I stole this
> I rebel with a raised fist, can we get a witness? ("Caught, Can We Get a Witness!")

Hip hop pushes Rose's allegations a step further by incorporating the elements of commercial culture (and therefore fetish) into a form of composition. "Every past commodification − of blues, of rock-n-roll, or jazz, and of hip-hop itself − haunts the musical mix," Russell Potter writes. "Sometimes in person (a digital sample), sometimes only as a "ghost" or trace (a passing act of Signifyin(g) on some past text)" (Potter 110). Emblematic positioning of the artifacts of popular culture becomes a grammar. Just as the Blue Note record covers turned automobiles into the language of cool design and sound, hip hop artists reshape consumer culture into music. Their activities reconfigure the Marxist critique of consumer fetishism as an artificially constructed, collective cultural

desire in which the value of the object displaces the value of the labor which produced the object. In hip hop, the materialist impulse does not always point to emotional displacement but rather indicates discursive formation. Examples come from Public Enemy's Flavor Flav's wearing a clock around his neck, the dominance of Mercedes Benz and Volkswagen emblems turned into jewelry, and the lyrics of numerous songs. On their *Paul's Boutique* album, The Beastie Boys incorporate the iconic memories of 1970s and '80s television culture into their music. From lines like "Date women on TV with the help of Chuck Woolery" to "And I dropped my drawers and it was Welcome Back Kotter / I'm not James at 15 or Chachi in charge" the song "Hey Ladies" fuses both the nostalgic reference to the commodity culture spurred by television programming as well as a critique of television influence. In "3 Minute Rule," the Beasties sing

> Get over on Miss Crabtree like my main man Spanky
> Excuse me young lady I don't mean to trouble ya
> Ya lookin' so hot inside your BMW.

Digable Planets repeats the Beasties' interest in consumer icons. In "Pacifics," they fuse basketball markers with television and film:

> Wake up, prayin' that the game's on
> Maybe it's the Runnin' Rebs, maybe it's the Knicks
> maybe it's a rerun of an old TV show
> like Hawaii 5-0 or karate flicks.

Finally, Kool Keith intensively pushes the issue through his remake of Elvis, the ultimate product of consumer culture as well as the ultimate product. Kool Keith transforms Elvis into the personality Black Elvis. Kool Keith appropriates the figure of Elvis Presley to create his own identity. Black Elvis, like the real Elvis, is saturated with the products and

personalities of popular culture; he can't escape from their dominant presence in daily

life.

> Black Elvis, recording in the 48-track studio
> Madison Square Garden soundcheck, to speak direct
> Fans in the upper level, backstage passes
> Wearing diamonds around my glasses, leather coat
> Thirty thousand from Wilson, counting the mills
> I'm talking to Andre Harrell with a chauffeur driving me around
> in the green Rolls Royce, parked parallel, on Fifth Avenue
> Stepping in Bloomingdale's, waiting for Celine Dion to get her nails done
> Tour dates start tomorrow, MCI send the cash through Wells Fargo
> Black Elvis, 28 Gs a night
> Tour bus with the Motley Crue, who gon' stop who?
> Rock star don't need no tattoo
> Guitar out of the sharp, Fender bass with the Stratocaster. ("Black Elvis")

Kool Keith returns the rhetoric of cool to the fetish. The objects of desire (Rolls Royce,

Celine Dion, Fender Stratocasters) become the building blocks of electronic grammar. "I

make sentences out of things," French artist Louis Pons proclaims in Agnes Vardes' film

*The Gleaners and I*. Like these hip hop artists, Pons collects the odds and ends of

consumer culture because these items operate as the building blocks of electronic

language. As Greil Marcus writes, "pop culture is a product – a show, a spectacle, a

channeling of suppressed wishes into marketable form – and it is an impulse – a

production of suppressed wishes that once released can call their own tune" (*Lipstick*

*Traces* 149). Marcus' notion of pop culture as communication compliments Jeff Noon's

concept of "the Golden Age of Appearances" in his cut and pasted mix of stories *Pixel*

*Juice*.

> We don't even call them names, really; rather we have logos, or corporate
> identities, or else brands or trademarks, copyrighted designs, slogans, tags,
> or communiqués.
> Nothing is real, and that's how we like it. (132)

For Robert Farris Thompson, the notion that the fetish can produce discourse stems from Yoruban commutation of gods into iconic representations of emotions. As I briefly mentioned in Chapter One, Farris Thompson argues that the dominant emotion in this shift from cultural production (appropriating the religious icon) to writing (the artistic display of that icon) is cool. Updated, under cool's terms, the gods of electronic culture are consumer products, material goods positively appreciated as fetish, as in *Wired* magazine's Fetish section, an iconic advertising section promoting high-tech gadgetry as displacement of desire. *Wired* follows Stuart Hall's commentary in *Popular Arts*: "pop culture allows for the creation of artificial wants in the field of commercial culture" (302). When these desires produce discourse, we are working within the rhetoric of cool. Chapter Four will examine how such ideas translate into contemporary, electronic writing and how they update the discipline of composition studies.

CHAPTER FOUR
COMPOSITION

*My interest is not only in the technology itself but also in the problem of inventing the practices that may institutionalize electronics in terms of schooling* - Gregory Ulmer *Heuretics*

*The basic law of association and conditioning is known to college students even in America: Any object, feeling, odor, word, image in juxtaposition with any other object, feeling, word or image will be associated with it* - William Burroughs *Nova Express*

*Readymades, collage found art or found text, intertexts, combines, détournement, and appropriation – all these terms represent explorations in plagiarism* - Critical Art Ensemble "Utopian Plagiarism"

In a short survey of the field of composition published in the 1987 issue of *College Composition and Communication* (*CCC*), Edward P. J. Corbett remarked, "I have always dated the emergence of rhetoric as the rationale for the teaching of composition from the spring of 1963, when the Conference on College Composition and Communication held its annual convention in Los Angeles" ("Teaching Composition" 445). The 1963 meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) marks an important moment for composition pedagogy. Often cited as an historic conference in the history of composition,[1] a considerable amount of papers presented at the 1963 CCCC gathering indicated composition studies' need to redefine itself. Stephen North argues that although moments like the development of Harvard's 1949 composition requirement or the 1956 National Council For Teachers of English (NCTE) Commission on the English curriculum report are monumental events in

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[1] see North (1987), Faigley (1992), and Sirc (1994 ) for further work highlighting the importance of this conference.

composition studies, the discipline's contemporary beginnings transpire in 1963 (and the CCCC conference). For North, 1963 marks a moment in which the academic practice of reporting classroom activities and results yielded to more theoretical concerns. "We can therefore date the birth of modern Composition, capital C, to 1963. And what marks its emergence as a nascent academic field more than anything else is this need to replace practice as the field's dominant mode of inquiry" (North 15).

The re-emergence of academic attention to composition in 1963 also comes from Eric Havelock, who I mentioned early in Chapter One. Havelock found 1963 to be a "watershed" date in writing theory because of the near-simultaneous appearance of several publications (writings by McLuhan, Goody, Watt, and Havelock) interested in how writing affects culture.[2] Juxtaposing these figures' works, Havelock understood 1963 as renewed interest in grammatology, the history of writing. The 1967 publication of Jacques Derrida's influential *Of Grammatology* further extends Havelock's observation. Derrida's usage of grammatology as a term to describe the study of writing came from I. J. Gelb's 1952 *A Study of Writing: The Foundations of Grammatology*. "The aim of this study is to lay a foundation for a new science of writing which might be called grammatology," Gelb wrote (v). "The question of what lies at the basis of all writing – words or ideas – is clearly the same as the question of what lies at the basis of all human intercommunication" (Gelb 12). Derrida notes in a footnote to *Of Grammatology*, "the subtitle [of Gelb's text] disappears in the 1963 edition." (Derrida 323). The introduction of composition (the academic study of writing at the level of

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[2] Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz also point to the importance of Havelock's observation in their introduction to Friedrich Kittler's *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Gregory Ulmer makes a similar point in "One Video Theory (Some Assembly Required)" in *Critical Issues in Electronic Media*, Ed. Simon Penny.

undergraduate instruction) into the rhetoric of cool works to reinstate the subtitle of Gelb's text so that we can understand cool's relationship to both the history and the teaching of writing. In particular, Derrida's inclusive definition of writing (grammatology) is important to the rhetoric of cool's extrapolation from a variety of media sources.

> For some time now, as a matter of fact, here and there, by a gesture and for motives that are profoundly necessary, whose degradation is easier to denounce than it is to disclose their origin, one says "language" for action, movement, thought, reflection, consciousness, unconsciousness, experience affectivity, etc. Now we tend to say "writing" for all that and more: to designate not only the physical gestures of literal pictographic or ideographic inscription, but also the totality of what makes it possible; and also, beyond the signifying face, an inscription in general, whether it is literal or not and even if what it distributes in space is alien to the order of the voice: cinematography, choreography, of course, but also pictorial, musical, sculptural "writing." (Derrida 9)

In this way, the rhetoric of cool argues that it belongs to grammatology. In other words, the study of grammatology must include the rhetoric of cool because cool offers an inclusive understanding of "writing" within electronic culture. Cool's proposal for media study, in turn, offers composition theory and practice appropriate alternatives to a tradition of writing instruction, which, composition studies claims, came under attack during 1963. This chapter breaks down the importance of 1963 to composition studies and argues that the inclusion of media study (along the lines of Derrida's inclusive definition of grammatology) has, for the most part, been ignored by writing instruction. To understand cool's relationship to writing pedagogy, this chapter attempts to frame the juxtaposition of media studies with composition studies in the overall 1963 collage.

Derrida's theoretical interest in writing belongs within the compositional paradigm shift Stephen North describes as beginning in 1963. In 1963, North notes, a

distinct shift from instructor reportage of classroom experience to the development of rigid compositional theory occurs. North calls those composition instructors participating in this shift the Philosophers.

> After 1963, the movements of the philosophical community can be seen as part of the reform of English as a whole: in the work of some of the Curriculum Study Centers funded by Project English, for example; or, in perhaps even more emblematic form, the Dartmouth Anglo-American Conference on the Teaching and Learning of English, where, in a month of debate, fifty participants manage to hammer out a list of eleven points which mix philosophy, politics, and pedagogy. (North 93)

Regarding English studies, North's Philosophers can be seen in a broader context as including the eventual influx of French poststructuralist theorists into 1960s American English departments' curriculum: Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, and, as I've mentioned, Derrida. Typically, the concerns of poststructuralism, represented here loosely by Derrida, and composition have been seen as incongruent.[3] John Schilb, however, argues that each discipline's respective understanding of what rhetoric consists of should be read in juxtaposition with the other. Juxtaposing the 1963 CCCC conference with poststructuralism's influential 1966 Johns Hopkins University conference, "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man," Schilb describes a combination of both interests' understanding of rhetoric, one he feels useful to composition and critical theory. For Schilb, the simultaneous readings of temporal moments, like those belonging to composition and critical theory, shed new light on old terms such as rhetoric.

> Composition theorists as well as literary theorists have failed to compare these two meetings. Few people in composition studies acknowledge the Johns Hopkins symposium, while few in literary studies have even heard of CCCC, let alone its meeting of 1963. But an English department should, in fact, think about the two conferences together, for among other things, they suggested quite different futures for rhetoric. (Schilb 19)

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[3] See, for instance, Maxine Hariston's "Comment and Response" *College English* 52 1990 694-96.

Schilb's concern has been further stressed by composition scholars like Sidney Dobrin, who argues that composition and poststructuralism are, in effect, one and the same. "What is it about postmodern composition theory that makes it *composition theory*?" Dobrin asks (30). "It is precisely [the] introduction of postmodern theory into composition that will promote theoretical developments of [various] schools of thought while at the same time extending our understandings of composition" (Dobrin 47).

My concern is not in comparing the two 1960s events, as Schilb recommends, but in thinking about the mosaic formed when poststructuralism meets composition in the guise of grammatology. The rhetoric of cool, whose origins I described in Chapter One as temporal (McLuhan, Baraka, Farris Thompson) and as poststructuralist (Baudrillard), follows Schilb's interest in temporal juxtaposition as heuristic. Such significant temporal moments become located within overall paradigm shifts, the likes of which both North and Schilb emphasize. Indeed, the idea of a paradigm shift taking place in the early '60s is emphasized in Thomas Kuhn's often mentioned 1962 *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Unlike Kuhn's notion of paradigm shifts, which focuses on the rejection of one theory for another, 1963 developments in writing adapt a more McLuhanist approach. New forms do not replace the old but rather append them. The task for participants in such shifts, McLuhan writes, is to understand how the shift underway affects other cultural formations. Writing in the same year as Kuhn, McLuhan notes, "if a new technology extends one or more of our senses outside us into the social world, then new rations among all of our senses will occur in that particular culture" (*Gutenberg Galaxy* 54). McLuhan's interest in writing, like Derrida's, overlaps with the changes underway in 1963 composition, modifications that asked, among other things, how new

technological developments would affect traditional approaches to writing and research instruction; a question which continues to trouble composition studies. In this sense, the legacy of 1963 paradigm shifts reflects Ted Nelson's definition of the term paradigm, which he translates as the "paradigm argument": "arguments where two different people are speaking inside two different paradigms, and they cannot understand what the other person is saying, or how that person could possibly believe it" ("Opening Hypertext" 43). In other words, through the 1963 collage, this chapter asks how can composition understand the language of new media, when it often can't believe what it is hearing?

In this final chapter, I want to move slightly away from the direction of the preceding chapters. They suggested the ways cool learns from media formations by identifying specific moments as contributors to the 1963 collage. Instead, in this chapter I argue that the overall 1963 paradigm shift should inform rhetoric and composition in ways it has not yet fully done. Consequently, the rhetoric of cool challenges the institution of writing instruction by arguing for a media-intensive pedagogy that originates in 1963. The rationale for this project, then, belongs as much to grammatology as to the temporal juxtapositions I have formulated. The rhetoric of cool argues not only for a specific electronic rhetoric, but begins a critique of composition studies through its selected juxtapositions. The consequence of this final chapter lies in the challenge to composition studies to rethink its relationship to the broad spectrum of writing the rhetoric of cool displays.

## Composition Studies

In composition, the paradigm shift begun in 1963 arrives in a number of ways, notably in the relationship between composition studies and rhetoric. In 1963, Richard

Weaver expressed dissatisfaction with the state of rhetorical and compositional instruction. "Our age has witnessed the decline of a number of subjects that once enjoyed prestige and general esteem, but no subject, I believe, has suffered more amazingly in this respect than rhetoric" (201). "We do not have, despite several titles, a modern rhetoric," Francis Christensen added to Weaver's complaint in an essay from the October 1963 *CCC* issue. (155). According to Sharon Crowley, such displeasure in early '60s rhetoric was indicative of a general need for pedagogical change for both students and teachers. "During the 1960s, students began to express their dissatisfaction with business as usual in the freshman writing class" (*Composition in the University* 205). For some instructors, the answer to an overall discontent in writing instruction could come from a revitalization of classical rhetoric. 1963 Publications like George Kennedy's *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, Eric Havelock's *Preface to Plato*, or Edward P.J. Corbett's "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" (from the same *CCC* issue as Christensen's article) sought to return classical rhetorical traditions to academic interest, what Gerald Mulderig calls the "rhetorical revival" of the early '60s. With the exception of Havelock, this view strived for an un-McLuhanist approach to grammatology, or, we might say, an un-grammatological approach to writing instruction in general.

Instead of examining how the rhetorical canon had been affected by new technological innovations, these writers argued for a complete return to what was perceived as a lost art of discourse. "What does classical rhetoric have to offer composition teachers?" Corbett inquired ("The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" 162). Seeing classical rhetoric as a handbook which students can draw from in order to properly perform such rhetorical feats as *status*, *dispositio*, and *imitation*, Corbett

answered his own question by responding "a great deal." "What most of our students need, even the bright ones, is careful, systematized guidance at every step in the writing process. Classical rhetoric can provide that kind of positive guidance" ("The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" 164). Alongside Corbett's essay in the same issue of *CCC*, Wayne Booth's "The Rhetorical Stance" probed what rhetoric exactly entails.

> Is there such an art? If so, what does it consist of? Does it have a content of its own? Can it be taught? Should it be taught? If it should how do we go about it, head on or obliquely? (Booth 139)

Booth's response, the rhetorical stance, appears less as the paradigm shift it promises to be and more as a return to classical rhetorical thought: knowledge of all available arguments, know one's audience, voice, and speaker ethos. Booth argues for the Ciceronian breakdown of invention plus a few added elements. Combined with Booth's conception of rhetoric as the Aristotelian "art of persuasion," the rhetorical stance is a plea for a classical return as well.

Similar to the previous examples of cool discussed in this dissertation, academic figures like Weaver, Booth, and Corbett searched for ways to change the apparatus. They chose, though, to reinstate an old form in place of the emerging new. Corbett, for example, claimed that Greek orators or rhetoricians "made more provision for bringing 'the whole soul of man into activity' than do the authors of any modern textbooks that I know of" ("The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" 162). The preference for Greek oration might have drawn upon the bias for speech (*logos*) over writing. As Havelock demonstrates in *Preface to Plato*, literacy for the Greeks was determined by command of

oral discourse.[4] Orality produced the Greek community and shaped the way it defined itself.

> The essential vehicle of continuity was supplied by a fresh and elaborate development of the oral style, whereby a whole way of life, and not simply the deeds of heroes, was to be held together and so rendered transmissible between the generations. (*Preface to Plato* 119)

The return to the Greek position in 1963, then, appears as a logocentric view of how to build a literate populace. Contemporary literacy should come from the ways oral discourse was once taught and learned, these writers argue. Such notions play into Derrida's critique in *Of Grammatology* of a dominant Western preference for logocentrism. The point is addressed as well through Havelock's interest in 1963.

> To be sure, some notice of the role of the spoken as opposed to the written tongue goes back to the eighteenth century, and more recently field anthropologists have compiled extensive reports of "primitive" societies (meaning nonliterate ones) which have indirectly pointed to the need for a category of human communication designated as primary orality. But the suggestion took the form of a firm concept only after 1963. Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy* (1982), in which the concept is crystallized and defined, appends a bibliography covering the history of scholarship and speculation in this field, from the eighteenth century to the present. The list of authors and works cited can be conveniently divided chronologically, between those who have written later than 1963 and those who wrote before that date. (*Muse Learns to Write* 25)

Literacy, as understood by Booth and Corbett, is tied to the Greek idealized form of rhetoric in which oral imitation dominates discourse. "Our students might very well profit from the ancient discipline of imitation," Corbett claimed ("The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" 163). Education in the Greek system, to a large extent based on

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[4] Havelock actually defines Greek culture in terms of non-literacy, but I take this to mean something different than lacking literacy. Instead, I understand Havelock's usage of the oral-based non-literacy as a contrast to 20th century conceptions of literacy in terms of reading and writing. "The total non-literacy of Homeric Greece, so far from being a drawback, was the necessary medium in which the Greek genius could be nursed to its maturity" (*Preface to Plato* 127).

students copying recited passages (imitating previous styles and discursive content), offered Corbett a viable model for 1963 composition. Corbett's assumption, however, is that learning comes from imitation and not aggressive confrontation or questioning of the apparatus, its relationship to the surrounding culture, its connection to the individuals who operate in the culture, nor to its technological advancement in the culture. Corbett's model fits with Havelock's description of the Greek educational apparatus that knew about the new technology of writing, but opted for oral recitation instead. "[In Plato's day] the educational apparatus, as so often since, lagged behind technological advance, and preferred to adhere to traditional methods of oral instruction when other possibilities were becoming available" (*Preface to Plato* 40-41). Looking back to Greek culture in the time of great technological innovations in computing (which I will elaborate on shortly), Corbett's educational plan seems out of place. In fact, I argue that the traditions continued by educators like Corbett in the '63 collage remain in tact today,[5] only in different formations.[6] This chapter addresses composition's continued adherence to such stagnant methodologies[7] as if the rhetorical changes underway since 1963, changes

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[5] See James Berlin's *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985* for a list of composition instructors Berlin felt were revising classical rhetoric in composition courses during the 1980s. See also *Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse* by Robert Connors, Lisa Ede, and Andrea Lunsford for the continued application of classical rhetoric in composition programs.

[6] The preponderance of rhetoric textbooks that continue to instruct students in "coherence," "clarity," and choice of clear topic sentences as the building blocks of rhetoric do not fit with the way rhetoric has been affected by technology and new media forms. Instead, these instructions are the legacy of Aristotelian rhetorical instruction regarding discourse as clear. "A good style," Aristotle writes in *The Rhetoric*, "is, first of all, clear" (185). Media forms like television, film, music, hypertext, among others, differ greatly with this notion. This point will be repeatedly stressed throughout the chapter.

[7] This practice is often referred to as "current-traditional." Marked by excessive attention to the modes of discourse (narrative, compare and contrast, definition, classification), the final product over the composing process, and error counts, current-traditional rhetoric still maintains a stronghold on composition. See James Berlin's *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*, Robert Connors' "Current-Traditional Rhetoric: Thirty Years of Writing with a Purpose" in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 11:4 Fall 1981, and Sharon Crowley's *The Methodical Memory: Invention in Current-*

spurred on by technological developments affecting discourse, have been meaningless.[8]

The rhetoric of cool contends that attitudes like Corbett's contribute to a rhetorical

curriculum that, Gerald Graff notes, partly "lay in the prevailing philosophy of 'mental

discipline,' which held that in order to strengthen the students' character, academic study

should involve punishing, routine drill work" (*Beyond the Culture Wars* 128-129). As

Susan Miller makes clear, such routine demands upon students belong to a "practice in

composing that had once been a small part of continuing oral rhetorical curricula"

("Composition as a Cultural Artifact" 29). Graff and Miller emphasize a renewed

admiration for Greek rhetorical methods that have since, intended or not, produced a

problematic system of assessment in composition studies: recitation, copying paragraph

and sentence models, and the continued drilling of grammar and punctuation – all

practices recognized today as what Graff deems "routine, drill work." No matter how

much composition studies might attest to their disappearance, they prevail in a variety of

forms. When, for example, Northrop Frye writes in 1963 that "good prose style in both

speech and writing is supposed to be aimed at. But poetry, the main body of verse, is

always the central powerhouse of a literary education," he emphasizes the oral nature of

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*Traditional Rhetoric* and "The Evolution of Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric: 1850-1970" in
*Rhetoric Review* 13:2 1985.
Crowley's critique of current-traditional rhetoric in *The Methodical Memory* sheds light on its problematic
position in composition studies: "What is wrong with current-traditional rhetoric is that it has very little to
do with learning to write. Just as its initial success was stimulated by institutional needs, its continued
maintenance by the academy has a good deal more to do with institutional circumstances than it does with
the appropriateness of its theory of discourse for writing instruction" (147).

[8] For a critique of the influence of classical rhetoric on contemporary composition instruction, see C.H.
Knoblauch and Lil Brannon's *Rhetorical Traditions and the Teaching of Writing*: "For better of worse, the
writing classroom, even when superficially modernized by audiovisual aids and computer programs, more
faithfully sustains the worldview, the attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, and values, of antiquity than perhaps
any other twentieth-century educational enterprise. We think it's mainly for the worse" (22).
For an opposing view, one that sees strong parallels between classical rhetorical and the digital, see Richard
Lanham's "Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Practice, and Property" in *Literacy Online: The Promise (and Peril)
of Reading and Writing with Computers*, ed. Myron C. Tuman.

poetry over the written, the Greek tradition over the electronic, and thus re-enforces a rhetorical curricula that eventually falls back on rote drilling (Frye 26). The point I'm making is not a disparagement of classical rhetoric as irrelevant (it is relevant). Instead, the rhetoric of cool argues for the contextualization of Corbett's push for Greek classicism with the emerging electronic culture of 1963 so that its application is not drill work, sentence imitation, or mere imitation for the sake of an idealized model.

The reason why Corbett couldn't find a contemporary rhetoric textbook equal in quality to the Greek treatises was that he was defining contemporary literacy by a different standard: a civilization long replaced by new technologies. Writing in 1963, Jack Goody and Ian Watt noted that for contemporary definitions of literacy, Greek society provides the *eidos* of what literacy entails. "The rise of Greek civilization, then, is the prime historical example of the transition to a really literate society" ("The Consequences of Literacy" 42). Cool's approach, however, differs from the exact adaptation of past forms to current shifts and instead follows McLuhan's understandings of how new media affect the old. The problem with this desire to return to the old forms of media construction (classical rhetoric), is, as McLuhan states, one of transitional confusion.

> Our official culture is striving to force the new media to do the work of the old. These are difficult times because we are witnessing a clash of cataclysmic proportions between two great technologies. We approach the new with the psychological conditioning and sensory responses of the old. This clash naturally occurs in transitional periods. (*Medium is the Massage* 94-95)

For cool, 1963 becomes one such transitional period. Because the rhetoric of cool draws heavily upon the 1963 collage, the emphasis on Greek rhetoric is further complicated by the inclusion of writers like McLuhan whose investigation into the

paradigm shift underway from print to electronic culture takes rhetoric in the opposite direction. McLuhan doesn't see Greek culture as the savior of contemporary literacy, but rather a part a long history of literacy construction. Yet I include Booth and Corbett in the '63 collage because the oral connection they highlight maintains importance. As I mentioned in Chapter One, Geneva Smitherman's and Robert Farris Thompson's work on oral African-American tradition points to the influence of the oral in the production of the rhetoric of cool. Smitherman's notion of "cool talk" stems from the street slang developed by African-American youth and which is eventually adopted by a large scale urban culture. Updated, cool's relationship to oral discourse takes place in the electronic sphere, a point noted by music theorists like DJ Spooky or the Afrofuturist movement. Afrofuturism foregrounds African-American cultural production reconfigured by "recurring futurist themes" ("Welcome to Afrofuturism"), which rely heavily on technology. Afrofuturism exemplifies how oral discourse and electronic discourse merge to form the cool writer. In Afrofuturism, DJ Spooky claims, "the kind of non-linear type of psychological engagement that seems to be a part and parcel of African-American culture has become a visual trope that film makers like Stan Brakhage and Harry Smith were dealing with as well."

> This is what leads me to the idea of black culture as an emergent systems culture--i.e. whenever people are on-line and create dialog as a way of finding common themes of interest, there's always a kind of push and pull for narrative formation: that is how new ideas are forged in the world of digital media. (DJ Spooky)

These emergent systems of culture DJ Spooky hints at can be thought of as situated within grammatology for the ways they blend oral and written discourse in

order to produce an electronic practice. This practice reflects what Walter Ong calls "secondary orality":

> I style the orality of a culture totally untouched by any knowledge of writing or print, "primary orality." It is "primary" by contrast with the secondary orality" of present-day high-technology culture, in which a new orality is sustained by telephone, radio, television, and other electronic devices that depend for their existence and functioning on writing and print. (Ong 11)

To consider cool as a variation of Ong's secondary orality is to situate it concretely with the study of grammatology and literacy. In turn, we must question how orality and literacy intersect in the electronic. For Gelb, "the future of writing" (understood as grammatology) involved a simplifying of the alphabet, an "exact system of notation which could be shortened and simplified under certain conditions" (Gelb 246) in order to create a unified system of "visible speech." For contemporary theorists of writing, the future of writing is not about reconfiguring the alphabet but how we define contemporary practices already underway. The emerging electronic literacy takes many names,[9] yet the challenge is to understand its effect upon the places of higher learning and the ways students are taught to write.

### Creating a Composition Theory

In 1963, the notion of writing literacy concentrates on what students do in the classroom. Notably, this is expressed in the area of research: researching how composition functions (the level of institutional awareness into its own practices) and exploring how students do research (what we make students do). Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer's classic 1963 work, *Research in Written*

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[9] While my preference is to think in terms of Greg Ulmer's concept of *electracy*, other terms have been floated in academic circles: Nancy Kaplan's *e-literacies*, Jay David Bolter's "the late age of print," and the more general term "visual literacy" come immediately to mind.

*Composition*, began the process of examining classroom practice itself as an area of research. By carefully analyzing the various factors involved in student writing (classroom space, teacher attitude, time allotted for writing, student topics, allowance for revision, grammar instruction etc.),  Braddock, Lloyd-Jones and Schoer attempted to create a new, compositional paradigm, one which would legitimize the place of composition theory within the academic curriculum. The writers introduce their task as an uncovering of  problematic composition methodologies.

> Today's research in composition, taken as a whole, may be compared to chemical research as it emerged from the period of alchemy: some terms are being defined usefully, a number of procedures are being refined, but the field as a whole is laced with dreams, prejudices, and makeshift operations. (5)

The writers opted for empirical evaluation of classroom practice in order to analyze the effectiveness of varied composition practices. Classifying classroom practices as "variables," *Research in Written Composition* represents a scientific shift in composition studies. For North, the book begins composition's "methodological land rush."

> Composition is declared to be essentially virgin territory; little is known, and even that little is of questionable value, the result of blundering or careless work. If old composition is to become new Composition; if the "profession," as its membership seemed ready to call it, is to take its rightful place in the academy, the dominance of practice and sloppy research would have to end. (North 17)

Richard Young sees the same text as the beginning of the theory debates in composition. Referring to *Research in Written Composition*, Young writes, "Researchers [in composition] have been primarily concerned with problems of application, notably with pedagogical practice, rather than with problems of theory. Purely theoretical problems are seldom of much interest as long as the principal features of the paradigm are unchallenged" (31). Young contends that the creation of a rhetoric of invention is

hampered by the institutionalized practice of the very items Braddock et al critiqued and which remained within the educational apparatus: critical examination of student sentences, paragraph constructions, ability to engage with the modes of discourse, and dependence on error counts of student writing. For Young, and for my project, *Research in Written Composition* appropriately recognized the need for theoretical and practical change, but little has changed since; many of the practices encountered by Braddock et al. remain the basis of contemporary composition programs. If Braddock et al. sought to undermine the "alchemy" of composition methodology, they achieved very little. Nevertheless, the scientific context of Braddock et al. will become more interesting as this chapter explores composition's 1963 juxtaposition with computer technology. In the meantime, as Young indicates, *Research in Written Composition* marks another moment in the composition paradigm shift.

Albert Kitzhaber's work does so as well. In the same issue of *CCC* featuring Booth and Corbett's writings, Kitzhaber's "4C, Freshmen English, and the Future" appears. Challenging the intellectual rigor of freshmen English, Kitzhaber commented, "a great many freshmen composition courses represent little and sometimes no advance beyond similar work in high school" ("4C" 130). Like Braddock et al., Kitzhaber pleaded for composition instructors and CCCC to rethink how composition is taught.

> The English curriculum must be thought through afresh in the light of present conditions in our society and the present state of knowledge about the matters that we teach, or ought to teach, in the English classroom. ("4C" 131)

Along with his contribution to *CCC*, Kitzhaber published in 1963 *Themes, Theories, and Therapies*. In his analysis of a Dartmouth class of freshmen and their writing habits, Kitzhaber continued the work done by Braddock et al. by questioning composition

studies' emphasis on certain grading principles (the marking of "wrong words" in student writing), the lack of clarity surrounding assignments (the general "theme" paper), and the divorce between writing instruction and other areas of academic interest (notably literature). Like Braddock et al, Kitzhaber introduced science into the composition program by suggesting future use of technology in the classroom.

> A teaching machine or a programmed text is a device that presents one item or frame at a time; that is, it allows students to see one sentence with a critical word left out or one statement followed by a question. The student writes the required answer on the program itself or on an answer tape or booklet. If he has been using a typical teaching machine, it then activates a mechanism that moves his answer under a clear plastic window (where he cannot change it) at the same time that it reveals the correct answer. (*Themes, Theories, Therapies* 85)

Foreseeing the usage of computers in classrooms, Kitzhaber directed attention to potential problems inherent in applications comprised of merely preprogrammed responses and answers. For Kitzhaber, such activities are not conducive to learning. In fact, Kitzhaber discusses programs we can recognize today as question and answer drills. These exercises, whether on-line or on purchased computer disks or CD-ROMS, remain popular methods of teaching grammar and punctuation. Cool's interest in classroom computing, however, isn't in reproducing the question and answer drill which, as Kitzhaber indicated in 1963, is limiting in its ability to teach new skills.

> The mechanical aspects of writing are essentially superficial; teaching their correct use, difficult though it may often be, is not synonymous with teaching composition. (*Themes, Theories, Therapies* 85)

Kitzhaber's suggestion for introducing computer technology into the composition classroom opens up new questions for the 1963 collage. One such question is that of research. How does research function in the computer classroom? Or as Gregory Ulmer asks, "What will research be like in an electronic apparatus?"(*Heuretics* 32) As I continue

to emphasize, the 1963 juxtapositions I'm laying out argue that composition-based research must include media study. Although not typically recognized for doing so, the Philosophers of '63, as Stephen North refers to them, begin composition's interest in media, whether they endorsed its inclusion or not and whether the followed up on their initial observations or not. For the early 1960s, one such area of media production was television. While Braddock et al. endorsed the usage of kinescopes (filmed television broadcasts), they critiqued educational interest in television instruction.

> Despite the fact that much money has been granted by foundations for experiments in the use of television as an instructional aid, little of the research, as published, seems convincing, at least where instruction in written composition is concerned. (47)

Recommending that television be reserved for "correspondence students who cannot be present on a college campus" (47), the writers seem unaware of the cool status afforded television by McLuhan. McLuhan based *Understanding Media's* chapter on television on Edith Efron's 1963 *TV Guide* article "The Timid Giant." McLuhan interpreted Efron's description of television networks' self-censorship in reporting controversial domestic issues as indicative of the power of cool media and, we might assume (though McLuhan never uses this term), *cool writers*. Television needs to capitulate to governmental pressure and employ self-censorship, McLuhan argued. Otherwise, audiences would become *too involved* in the political process.

> As a cool medium TV has, some feel, introduced a kind of rigor mortis into the body politic. It is the extraordinary degree of audience participation in the TV medium that explains its failure to tackle hot issues. (*Understanding Media* 269)

By this logic, the interactive nature of cool mediums like television pose as highly desirable tools for contemporary educational practices because of the ways they

involve students and redefine classical understandings of *audience*. Indeed, efforts were underway in 1963 to introduce television into the educational apparatus through educational television systems (ETV). ETV, produced by several manufacturers and which integrated television with pedagogy, attracted considerable interest in classroom usage of television for pedagogical purposes. According to the November 7, 1963 issue of *Education U.S.A.*, "All except one of the 17 largest colleges in the country (enrollment over 20,000) have some form of instructional television for credit" (39). One 1963 advertisement for Jerrold J-Jacks closed-circuit ETV system refers to itself as a "new teaching tool in over 10,000 classrooms." In addition, during this time, the U.S. Air Force Academy began its own program to develop television-based instruction. Writing in the September 1963 issue of *American School and University*, Captain John B. Henry described ways to innovate the ETV setup by reconfiguring the system to be instructor-directed and therefore more receptive to student need. Henry's efforts reflect Wilbur Schramm Kack Lyle, and Ithiel de Sola Pool's 1963 study of ETV which examined its implementation in curriculum design. The authors noted television's ability to affect pedagogy:

> It has been learned that the medium has a great power to attract and hold attention and interest, that it has an unequaled ability to share good teaching and excellent demonstrations (for example, permitting 100,000 students at the same time to look through a microscope, or into an atomic reaction), that good teaching on television is about effective as classroom teaching – but that it is more effective in some kinds of teaching than in others. In particular, it is more effective when it is built into a program of class and individual activities than when it is being used to carry the entire burden of a class. (165)

Despite the attraction of television instruction, opposition remained. "Yet some among our number reject the idea of using television in teaching for fear of, perhaps,

mechanistic take-over as well as for other reasons," Bryn Gooch wrote in the late 1960s

in an effort to encourage usage of ETV in the humanities.

> "Illiteracy!" they shout. "It leads to illiteracy!" What we have to remember
> is that he potential of television has never been fully explored or realized
> and that the medium, at this stage, cannot be condemned because we have
> not done much with it, especially in the educational field. (Gooch 38)

Updated, the move from 1960s television enhanced classrooms to contemporary interest

in computer pedagogy can be seen in Gooch's concerns. 1960s' fears of an illiterate

populace educated by television reflect the twentieth and twenty-first century trepidation

of the highly contested term, computer literacy. The analogy, then, is that what TV was

for 1960s education, computers are for today. Only, for my project, fear does not play a

role. Instead, interactivity does.

Based on McLuhan's evaluation of its "coolness," television's capacity for high

interaction represents media's general appropriateness for literacy (from which my focus

directs itself to composition studies). "TV has provided a new environment of visual

orientation and high involvement that makes accommodation to our older educational

establishment quite difficult," McLuhan wrote. "One strategy of cultural response would

be to raise the visual level of the TV image to enable the young student to gain access to

the old visual world of the classroom and the curriculum" (*Understanding Media* x).

According to McLuhan, the educational apparatus, and its greatest asset - writing

instruction - must learn from new media forms like television.

> The student finds no means of involvement for himself and cannot
> discover how the educational scheme relates to his mythic world of
> electronically processed data and experience that his clear and direct
> responses report.
> Education must shift from instruction, from imposing of stencils, to
> discovery – to probing and exploration and to the recognition of the
> language of forms. (*Medium is the Massage* 100)

The pedagogical fear of mixing popular culture (distributed largely through television in the '60s and today through the Web) with academic study is confronted by the challenge of merging the two areas of discourse. McLuhan's proposal in *Explorations #8's* article "Classroom Without Walls" pleads for the collapse of the entertainment/academic dichotomy so that, instead of the separate specializations of pedagogy and television viewing, a mosaic forms.

> It's misleading to suppose there's any difference between education & entertainment. This distinction merely relieves people of the responsibility of looking into the matter. It's like setting up a distinction between didactic & lyric poetry on the ground that one teaches and the other one pleases. However, it's always been true that whatever pleases teaches more effectively. (qtd in *McLuhan Hot & Cool* 116).

In this sense, the rhetoric of cool appropriates the models of media (including popular media forms like film and music) for the purposes of composition. It then positions those writers who adapt rhetorical strategies from media cool writers. Even though the 1963 CCCC's call for a renovation of composition practices has been heralded as, in North's words, the beginning of composition with a capital "C," the refusal to acknowledge simultaneous developments in media production are central to this chapter's focus. It is one thing to imagine the personalities of 1963 as embodiments of the spirit of cool (figures like Williams Burroughs or Kenneth Anger). It is another for composition studies to recognize these figures' output as cool writing. For composition to acquire the capital "C" North grants it, it must include the other "c" word: cool.

Cool writing means learning from and working in media. What I will argue in this chapter is that composition has yet to understand what media-based writing entails. The absence of any mention of Burroughs, McLuhan, underground cinema, etc. in either *CCC*

or in the works of Kitzhaber and Braddock et al. contrasts with not only these writers' and medium's conceptions of new media as writing, but the temporal advertising appearing on the pages of many of composition and education's journals as well. 1963 journals like *American School and University* are full of advertisements for media equipment, which one assumes, would be used in various classrooms, including those where composition was taught. These ads include Kodak Pageant Film projectors, Kodak sound recording tapes, the Ampex E-65 tape recorder, 3M tapes, Astatic's Astatiphone headphones, Sony video recorders, and Magnavox TVs. In fact, one advertisement in the *American School and University's* March 1964 issue asks: "Will the Sony Videocorder Replace Teachers?" "Of course not," the ad comforts.

> Nothing will every replace the teacher. But the new SONY Videocorder will go a long way toward alleviating the shortage of good teachers, of multiplying the efficiency of the school teaching staff and making the tax dollar go a lot further in this era of increasing costs.

Reading these advertisements in juxtaposition with composition studies' self-proclaimed need for reinvention creates a McLuhanist mosaic in which media and writing become synonymous. The collage I am creating expands so that we cannot consider composition without its relationship to new media practices. In this sense, composition looks to the collagist forms of various media for counsel, a direction composition scholar John Trimbur feels to be central to composition studies' make-up.

> Composition studies has composed itself not by systematic engineering but by a kind of piecemeal bricolage, cutting and splicing elements from the intellectual landscape that seem useful. The result is that composition studies looks more like a collage - a postmodern pastiche of juxtaposed parts than a unified field. (117)

To understand the implications of research for composition, therefore, the rhetoric of cool carries over its interest in collage. The greatest failure of composition studies to teach

media is reflected in the discipline's medium for information distribution, the textbook. Examining how student research has actually come to resemble less a collage (in Trimbur's words) and more a routine, I look to the ways research pedagogy has been taught through 1963 textbook culture. In turn, I ask, why has textbook production ignored the cool writer?

## Research

The foundation of modern, academic research is the Modern Language Association's (MLA) bibliography. The online version of the MLA's extensive indexing system begins in 1963, a coincidental date important to my collage, for it suggests, if only by accident, the ways 1963 motivates composition research. In 1996, the first Thomas R. Watson Conference in Rhetoric and Composition, held at the University of Louisville, made a similar observation, noting this date as the beginning of modern composition practices, of which research is a major component. In a publication of the event's proceedings,[10] the editors note:

> For the first Watson Conference, we focused on the period between 1963 and 1983, a time often referred to as the "Birth of Composition" (with a capital "C"). In those 20 years, composition changed in a number of crucial ways, including the development of theoretical warrants and research methodologies, the transformation of pedagogical assumptions and practices, as well as a growth in professionalism. (xii)

While the *CCC* secretary report published in the journal's October 1963 issue stressed the need for developing new methods of research in the composition classroom, the research paradigm presented in 1963 and encouraged to develop hasn't grown despite claims to the contrary. In the composition classroom, research has not followed such

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[10] *History, Reflection, Narrative: The Professionalization of Composition, 1963-1983*, edited by Mary Rosner Beth Boehm, and Debra Journet.

1963 *CCC* recommendations as promoting "debate on the long research paper, its purpose, its place in the program" entirely (*CCC* 182). Instead, textbooks, the main source of student, research instruction, have allowed an ideology of stagnation to remain in place. This is despite many academic claims to the contrary. Composition theorists like Robert Connors and Lester Faigley indicate 1963 as important to textbook production, often drawing attention to specific composition textbooks either originating or gaining popularity in 1963, which I will discuss at greater length within this chapter. Indeed, the role of the textbook maintains an important place in 1963. In an accidental echo of Taylor Mead, the November 1963 issue of *Education U.S.A.* begins with the bold headline "The Textbook Revolution" and promises "Textbooks are recorders of revolutions – from the rise of Caesar to that of Mboya – but the year 1963 marks a revolution for the textbook industry that may change it for all time to come" (37). The rhetoric of cool, which positions itself as a textbook-like approach to teaching composition by studying the rhetorical methods of 1963 media, pays attention to the newsletter's proclamation; notably, cool focuses on one "revolutionary" aspect of the schoolbook revolution as outlined by *Education U.S.A.* and which seems to have alluded much of composition in 1963 - the introduction of audiovisual elements, resources for film, and television instruction.

Following Robert Connors' advice that often the best place to examine composition theory and practice is by studying the textbooks composition studies has employed over the years (Connors 208-209), we can juxtapose composition research with 1963 composition textbooks. One of the most notable representations of what composition research includes can be found in James McCrimmon's textbook *Writing*

*with a Purpose*. Although not its first printing, the 1963 edition of this composition handbook remained a tenet of composition studies for at least two decades after its publication. "*Writing with a Purpose* has continued to be resilient, still controlling a large share of the market for rhetoric texts in first year college writing courses" Lester Faigley remarks (Faigley 146). "The third edition of *Writing with a Purpose*," Robert Connors adds, "contained McCrimmon's first important new treatment of the process of composition" (211).

Connors and Faigley feel that McCrimmon's inclusion of a process-based pedagogy in the 1963 edition of *Writing with a Purpose* marked an important point in writing instruction. Their reading of *Writing with a Purpose* suggests that McCrimmon can thus be interpreted as pre-empting process theory, which often is cited as beginning a year later in D. Gordon Rohman and Albert O. Wlecke's *Pre-Writing: The Construction and Application of Models for Concept Formation in Writing*. Often credited as the first text to propose freewriting as heuristic, Rohman and Wlecke defined their theory of pre-writing by drawing upon cognitive theories of how ideas are formed mentally and then transferred to paper as writing. In particular, much of their understanding of what comprises pre-writing resembles Lev Vygotsky's theory of inner speech, put forth in the 1962 English translation of *Thought and Language*. Vygotsky defined inner speech as the cognitive process that produces ideas before they become written down. At times, Vygotsky contended, inner speech interferes with the writing process because writers think they have successfully transferred their thoughts, when, in fact, much has been lost in the process.

> Written language demands conscious work because its relation to inner
> speech is different from that of oral speech: The latter precedes inner

speech in the course of development, while written speech follows inner speech and presupposes its existence (the act of writing implying a translation from inner speech). (Vygotsky 182)

Rohman and Wlecke understood the writing process very similarly.

> Our original proposal was for research in the construction and application of models for concept formation. We assumed that a person becomes a writer at the moment when the merely "autistic" fantasies, day-dreams, and reveries of normal mental activity become mobilized to some specific purpose, in this case, the writing of a "subject." (Rohman and Wlecke 4)

In order to understand the relationship between cognitive development and writing, Rohman and Wlecke's work began with the simple question "Why do students write poorly?" (1) Believing that students devote too little attention to the mental process of discovery which precedes writing, the authors constructed a theory of pre-writing.

> That part of the entire activity called writing which occurs before words appear on the page, and that part after words on a page. The former we called "pre-writing," the latter "writing" and "re-writing." We concerned ourselves almost entirely with pre-writing both because we believed it to be the initial and crucial stage of the writing process, and because we believed it had not been given nearly enough of the theoretical attention it consequently deserved. (Rohman and Wlecke 12)

Rohman and Wlecke's theory of pre-writing proposed that students keep a journal, meditate in class, and use analogy in order to invent topics for writing assignments (Rohman and Wlecke 24). All of these exercises would allow students additional help in transferring their thoughts to understandable written expression. While none of these items are within the rhetoric of cool, the formation of the pre-writing movement at the same time as other events previously noted is worth considering for, at the very least, the 1963 need to develop invention practices for the educational apparatus. Rohman and Wlecke's definition of pre-writing does bear some semblance to strategies which will become important to the rhetoric of cool when I discuss electronic writing at the end of

this chapter: pre-writers use "associations which imply no immediate benefit, the willingness to manipulate words, concepts, everyday assumptions, toying with apparently irrelevant objects and things" (Rohman and Wlecke 36). And the free-association advocated in the journal and meditation exercises resemble Kerouac's notion of spontaneous prose as well as Burroughs' thought associations motivated by the cut-up. Regarding McCrimmon's textbook, however, the pre-writing, discovery process Connors and Faigley believe McCrimmon endorses begs closer examination.

### Writing With(out) A Purpose

"Good writing is almost never accidental," McCrimmon instructs students in the opening pages of his textbook (McCrimmon 3). His advice speaks to the opposite of the temporal juxtapositions found in this dissertation. The rhetoric of cool works with accidental juxtapositions as heuristic for producing knowledge, recontextualizing the notion of pre-writing so that authorial purpose is shifted to the found object of research. The idea that, in cool, pre-writing is motivated by the various cultural artifacts gathered contrasts greatly with much of 1963 textbook instruction. In fact, the "purpose" stated within McCrimmon's book title, and which has since become common practice to list as the first thing freshmen writers must consider when beginning to write,[11] differs with the collagist practice of allowing accidental juxtapositions to guide the writing practice. Because 1963 has been labeled as important to composition studies, and because textbooks play such a powerful role within composition studies, I must, however, look at

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[11] Most textbooks instruct freshmen writers that all writers begin with a purpose; therefore, they must first have a purpose when writing. While I do not want to critique this instruction as misleading, I do want to emphasize that "purpose" can be deceptive. The idea that one begins knowing what one will write about before actually writing implies that heuristics occur cognitively before any research has been done. Therefore, research is merely a way of confirming what one already knows. This holdover belief from the Enlightenment positions the student as a source of knowledge onto herself. The larger implication is that one doesn't learn while one writes.

the ways textbooks like McCrimmon's continue to motivate the teaching of composition and keep loaded terms like "purpose" dominant. The intention is not to isolate McCrimmon's work (or any other textbook author) as the sole cause of current problems in composition pedagogy, but rather to consider how current practices have come into existence and the ways the rhetoric of cool seeks to rectify them or at least to challenge them.

Like many contemporary textbook authors, McCrimmon's "four qualities" of good writing: "completeness, unity, order, and coherence" (69) say nothing about the production of knowledge. These terms merely describe what the end result of the writing process should stylistically look like. The "clear" style of the freshman composition paper, then, dictates the work's content, a problematic point that will become important as this section progresses. McCrimmon's notion of research leads to a clear piece of writing that has little to do with what commonly is understood as "invention," the creation of something new. Instead, research figures more as an act of "confirmation" of existing ideologies and beliefs; in essence, a clear re-presentation of what already exists "clearly" in one's mind or on the pages of a given resource..

> There are four reasons for the prevalence of [research]. First, because it combines reading, note-taking, organization, and development at a mature level, it provides the student with a worthwhile experience in using many of the skills cultivated in the English course. Second, it gives him a practical introduction to his college library and helps him to use it efficiently thereafter. Third, it makes him familiar with research procedures and conventions that he will use increasingly in college. Fourth, it gives a conscientious student the intellectual satisfaction of becoming, at least by freshman standards, something of an expert on a particular subject. (McCrimmon 239)

McCrimmon's first three reasons for doing research are service oriented. These exercises will provide experience for other course work in the university. While

McCrimmon's fourth point may sound like knowledge production, the procedures for acquiring topics to write about, narrowing such topics, and preparing a bibliography, sound as if they are performed when one already has an idea about what a subject entails. Expertise is the goal in McCrimmon's model, not inquiry. One becomes an expert in a particular subject by studying material accumulated regarding that subject, then writes about the researched topic in an unproblematized manner. Sheridan Baker's 1962 composition handbook, *The Practical Stylist*, offers similar research advise. Baker counsels students to concentrate on argumentation when performing research, but to always focus on "controversial" subject matter.

> (1)Pick a subject in which there is much to be said on both sides; (2) take the side where your heart is; (3) write a thesis sentence with a *because* in it; (4) gather your material around and about the *pro* and *con*; (5) write an essay with beginning, middle, and end, and with a *pro-con* structure. (116)

The gathering of information, as writers like McCrimmon and Sheridan teach, always results in a clear answer which can systematically be summarized in a brief paper, often one divided up neatly into some variation of five paragraphs. Answers to specific cultural or textual problems can be identified as "right" or "wrong" as well as "for" or "against," a neat dichotomy suitable to the clearness and coherence research dictates. Sheridan, in particular, advises students engaged in research to "take few notes" and keep track of each source's position as being "pro" or "con" the student's research topic. For every piece of relevant information discovered during research, Sheridan instructs students, "Now is the time, too, to put a *pro* or a *con* in the upper right corner of your [note] card" (121).

The goal of these exercises "like that of most research papers," Kathleen McCormick writes regarding contemporary textbooks, "is to simplify and homogenize,

not to interrogate tensions within a given field of inquiry" (46). Or, as Joseph Janangelo states, this type of textbook ideology offers "dramatizations of student writing that conclude with conventional happy endings that suggest that composing is, after all, a linear process and that the writer will be able to effectively synthesize and present new and old ideas within the context of writing one paper" (94). Cool, however, teaches that synthesis is not linear, and that conflicting positions can produce new ideas when placed in juxtaposition to one another.

Like *Writing with a Purpose*, Cecil B. Williams and Allan Stevenson's 1963 composition textbook *A Research Manual* treats research as an unproblematic process in which students merely examine existing literature and refrain from posing new questions or positions. "Most college research is exposition, nor argumentation," the authors claim (75). McCrimmon offers complementary instruction:

> In general, undergraduate research papers are of two kinds: *reports* and *theses*. The chief difference between these types is one of purpose. The writer of a report wishes to find out the facts of his subject and present them in a clear, orderly, and detailed account. The writer of a thesis research paper is studying the facts to draw a conclusion from them; this conclusion becomes the thesis of his essay; and he selects and organizes his material to develop his thesis. (241)

McCrimmon's instructions for writing the research paper do not reflect the "watershed" heuristic Havelock identifies as 1963 and which functions as the model for this project, the complex juxtaposition of various elements to produce an alternative response to a cultural situation. To think of research as a dichotomy of two types seems, at the very least, limiting regarding both the writing's content and the student's role as producer of knowledge. As Richard Ohmann comments, within textbooks like McCrimmon's, "the problem of saying something is reduced to that of having a thesis

and that, in turn, to the problem of forming a pivotal sentence with certain features"
(153). The long term problems of McCrimmon's emphasis of the clear thesis statement
will be discussed shortly. For now, I draw attention to the instructions of selection and
organization.

When it comes to citation of found material, McCrimmon's advice is out of
synch with cool writers like Burroughs or the contemporary DJ.

> The research paper is admittedly and necessarily written from information
> derived from printed sources. But that information has to be woven into an
> essay which is essentially the student's own work. (McCrimmon 260)

McCrimmon's emphasis on the "student's own work" is understandable within the
context of the writing program requirements. Not doing "one's own work" constitutes
plagiarism, the gravest of all academic crimes, or so the institution claims. Contemporary
students researching their papers will find McCrimmon's advice repeated in handbooks
like Diane Hacker's widely popular *A Writer's Reference*. Hacker warns students, as
McCrimmon does, of the danger of plagiarism when accumulating resources.

> To prevent unintentional borrowing, resist the temptation to look at the
> sources as you take notes – except when you are quoting. Keep the source
> close by so you can check for accuracy, but don't try to put ideas in your
> own words with the source's sentences in front of you. (Hacker 76)

Without turning these examples into "straw men," given Chapter Two and
Three's focus on learning from media forms how the rhetoric of cool operates, the need
to update McCrimmon and the legacy of *Writing with a Purpose* becomes apparent. We
can do so by juxtaposing textbooks like *Writing with a Purpose* with other texts from the
same time period. In this sense, cool functions as a textbook as well. Beginning with
Burroughs' instructions for research, composition can learn how to construct an

electronic writing machine that treats the issues of "plagiarism" and "one's own work" in a new context:

> A writing machine that shifts one half one text and half the other through, a page frame on conveyor belts – (The proportion of half one text half the other is important corresponding as it does to the two halves of the human organism). Shakespeare, Rimbaud, etc. permutating through page frames in constantly changing juxtaposition the machine spits out books and plays and poems – The spectators are invited to feed into the machine any pages of their own text in fifty-fifty juxtaposition with any author of their choice any pages of their choice and provided with the result in a few minutes. (*The Ticket that Exploded* 65)

Burroughs' research paradigm learns from the make-up of new media. While not thinking along the lines of Burroughs, Kitzhaber can also be read as acknowledging the relevance of media to composition by suggesting, in a concluding list of recommendations for composition studies,

> a systematic attempt to help students become actively aware of what goes on inside good expository prose so they may come to know a little  more about the nature of the tools they themselves are using and thus perhaps learn to use them more intelligently. (139)

The most obvious tools available to students, in 1963 as well as today, are the tools of new media. "The tools" students use include the computer, the CD player and burner, the video recorder, the web browser, etc. By studying the methods of film, music, literature, and  media, as the preceding chapters have done, the rhetoric of cool fulfils one of Kitzhaber's recommendations. In fact, Kitzhaber's instructions make sense when juxtaposed with advice from Williams and Stevenson's *A Research Manual*. Like McCrimmon, the authors suggest that students doing research familiarize themselves with the library first, then follow explicit instructions on finding material and evaluating sources. When looking at a book for the first time, however, Williams and Stevenson advise students to "Sample some passages to see what experience, penetration, and logic

the writer seems to be endowed with. Sampling will also help you determine whether a work is more on the periphery of a particular study than at the center" (30). The sample, read slightly differently than Williams and Stevenson intended, informs my project at the level of composition through what several media forms have already made clear. Research comes from the sample. In effect, I sample this passage from *A Research Manual* to emphasize my point.

To regard composition, and the student research paper, as sampling, then, questions the apparatus of English studies. I will elaborate on this point shortly, but for now, we can examine 1963 formulaic instruction of student writing - the paragraph is an essay in miniature (McCrimmon 69) - or adherence to "completeness, unity, order, and coherence" (McCrimmon 69) as out of place with the electronic research paradigm. While electronic writing promotes diversity through the model of the mosaic (or collage), the 1963 textbook and the tradition it has encouraged represents a positivist trend within composition studies that highlights one way to write as the only way to write. "The one best way" principle of Frederick Taylor's principle of Scientific Management infiltrates composition studies at this level. Similar to what Henry Giroux identifies as a "culture of positivism," this form of instructional ideology "undermines any viable notion of critical historical consciousness" because it reduces the ways students construct discourse to a set formula intent on standardizing student writing (*Ideology Culture* 42). "Of all the subjects commonly taught in university curricula," Sharon Crowley adds, "composition is no doubt the skill least amenable to standardized instruction" (*The Methodical Memory* 136). While Kathleen McCormick doesn't use the term positivism, she does critique textbook reliance on terms like unity, completeness, balance, and coherence as belonging

to a dominant ideology interested in establishing a hegemonic hold on student learning. "A seemingly innocent directive about the paper's organization also suggests a particular way of conceiving of knowledge in the world: by the time students write their papers, they should be able to neutralize contradictions among sources and use those differences to create a 'complete picture'" (McCormick 44). In this sense, textbook ideology reinforces a dominant, institutionalized ideology of conformity for the purpose of creating a student-subject who adheres to the system. Be clear, be coherent, base your research on the careful construction of one unambiguous topic sentence, most textbooks instruct as if creating a future docile populace unwilling to complicate or disturb discourse. Under these terms, "the composition course socializes young people into the academy. It does not enhance their learning process or help them to become active participants in the ongoing discourse of the academic community – let alone in communities outside the academy" (*The Methodical Memory* 154). The composition course which follows the legacy of writers like McCrimmon, therefore, has been working against the notion of the cool writer.

The emphasis on "unity" and "coherence" that we see in McCrimmon and elsewhere today[12] are positivist assumptions about writing. The reoccurring theme that writers employ clarity and coherence in their work dismisses the media forms the rhetoric of cool draws upon and sets up a "one best way" approach to composition. Burroughs, Smith, Anger, and contemporary DJs have all challenged the assumptions that rhetoric

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[12] Contemporary examples might include Marcia Stubbs and Sylvan Barnett's *The Little Brown Reader* or Donald and Christine McQuade's *Seeing & Writing*. *Seeing & Writing*, for example, instructs students to study visual culture (comics, videos, photography, the Web), but when it comes to writing regresses to McCrimmon's positivism. Even though the authors declare that "there is no single way to write," the instructions that follow tell students to "have a purpose," thus evoking the title of McCrimmon's influential textbook.

must be "unified" and "coherent" to be persuasive. The rhetoric of cool, in turn, attempts to replace positivism through responses to questions posed within composition studies like that of Xiu and Fredric Gale's query as to how positivism affects composition. "What are the implications of textbooks' equivocal status in the discipline and of their impact upon scholarship and teaching in composition and rhetoric?" Gale and Gale ask. (4) For cool, a great deal, because it must present itself as an alternative to the ways composition is taught in the institution.

### The Intellectual Institution

The textbook remains an institutional practice which defines notions of literacy and intellectualism. Overall, the question of how writers and academics gain legitimacy within the apparatus of higher learning has been complicated in numerous ways. Regarding racial representation and access, Houston Baker notes:

> As the popular philosopher Pogo said in 1963, "Outside pressure [on the American academy] creates an inside pressure: academic conformity. The average [American] professor is no Socrates." Thus in 1963 the American university was a very quite, decorous, white project. (8-9)

Baker's identification of university racial policy with 1963 directs attention to cool's African-American origins. The role of African-American culture within the educational institution remains a point of contention at the level of language (Ebonics) course content (the whiteness of the canon), and cultural identity (the importance of cool). These issues also question the ways the institution defines its intellectual nature. What role does the institution allow a practice like cool, one which is based on, among other things, the rhetorical strategies employed by marginal writers and genres (Amiri Baraka, Chester Himes, the Beats, underground cinema, DJ methods)? What role does the institution allow cool, when it contradicts the teaching of many approved textbooks and

opts for a marginal understanding of writing instruction? Within the educational system, discourse as the product of popular culture earns the label lowbrow and even anti-intellectual. Writing about the rise of anti-intellectual trends in 1963, Richard Hofstadter remarked:

> That something has always been seriously missing in our educational performance, despite the high promise of our rhetoric, has been evident to the educators who have taken our hopes most seriously. The history of our educational writing poses a formidable challenge to those modern educational critics who yield too readily to nostalgia for good old days that apparently were never very good. (301)

Deeming American ideology of the late '50s and early '60s as "anti-intellectualism," Hofstadter expressed concern with attitudes directed against the so-called "eggheads" of a variety of intellectual circles including the university, what he referred to as an "old Jacksonian dislike of specialists and experts" (14). Public perception, Hofstadter reported, felt intellectuals are "pretentious, conceited, effeminate, and snobbish; and very likely immoral, dangerous, and subversive" (18-19). Suspicion of intellectuals, in turn, results in a paradox in which education becomes both an asset and an elitist and/or subversive possession.

> In our education, for example, it has never been doubted that the selection and development of intelligence is a goal of central importance; but the extent to which education should foster intellect has been a matter of the most heated controversy, and the opponents of intellect in most spheres of public education have exercised preponderant power. (Hofstadter 25)

In fact, educational efforts underway in 1963 worked to redefine intellectualism in English studies. Michael Shugrue notes that "The exhilaration of the profession late in 1963 can scarcely be overestimated" and that "1963 was indeed a year of achievement for the English profession" (37, 41). Federally funded programs like Project English worked to rewrite English curriculums on a national scale. Curriculum Study Centers at

Carnegie-Mellon, Hunter College, and the University of Oregon (directed by Albert Kitzhaber) introduced programs that merged language, literature, and composition in order to redefine the study body's cultural knowledge (Shugrue 37). A major objective of the Study Centers was to design and implement an inclusive educational curriculum covering early to advanced stages of the educational experience. Nevertheless, the programs initiated by these schools followed the patterns of 1963 educational reform I have previously described in this chapter. These programs proposed intellectual formation in the academic institution as limited to one methodology, which for Project English centered around the teaching of literature. As Carnegie-Mellon's core-statement read:

> The core of the program should be the literature – that the way to develop each course as to build its literary core first and then organize the study of composition and language around that literary core. (qtd in Shugrue 63)

Those items deemed un-intellectual or non-literary, like Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel's description in *The Popular Arts* of teaching detective fiction or pop music, are ignored for not being conducive to higher learning. Even though these forms (which I have explored in Chapter Two and Three) offer rhetoric specific strategies for constructing meaning, their un-intellectual and marginal stature keeps them from being proposed as belonging in the educational curriculum. Likewise, Hofstadter's argument concludes with a dismissal of 1950s and 1960s marginal voices, a diatribe against youth culture and the work it produces. Notably, Hofstadter doubted the Beats' contribution to intellectual discourse. "Not surprisingly, the beatniks, as even their sympathetic commentators are apt to concede, have produced very little good writing. Their most

distinctive contribution to our culture may in the end be their amusing argot" (Hofstadter 421). Again, to consider cool as a new form of intellectualism is to reject such positions.

The paradox expands when viewed in juxtaposition with the previous discussion on academic positivism. The trend to demote composition research (the ways students produce knowledge) represents, in fact, an updated version of anti-intellectualism, for it inhibits student learning by enforcing rote methods. At the very least, such action limits the boundaries of intellectualism. The student intellectual becomes shaped only by textbook ideology (clarity, coherence) instead of the temporal, social, economic, racial, gendered, and media formed juxtapositions students encounter daily, and which are never clear. At the level of identity formation, textbook ideology that teaches students to conform to set standards (Crowley's complaint regarding the composition textbook) creates a student-subject unwilling to complicate the writing process, who will refrain from either being "subversive" (thus, anti-intellectual) or altering the current paradigm. Critique becomes subservient to compliance. In this way, in a text he was commissioned originally to write in 1963, Richard Ohmann complains that textbook ideology tends to propagate a managerial and professional class intent on conforming to already set standards supported by a dominant order.

> For most of a hundred years, the purpose was fairly explicit. Composition was to train students to speak and write as gentlemen, and it did so by affirming the prestigious language habits of society and discoursing or shaming other habits by ruthlessly applying a few rules of usage and shibboleths of grammar. (Ohmann 167)

In other words, in composition there has been no place for Burroughs' dislocation of syntax or Anger's commutation of signifiers; no place for the détournement strategies

of the Situationists or Adbusters. There has been no place for the cool writer as alternative intellectual, a discrepancy the rhetoric of cool attempts to mend.

## Challenging the Institution

For composition theorists like Geoffrey Sirc, textbook ideology leads to the pedagogical construction of a "museum" like culture in which students "are 'invited' in to sample Culture and maybe even, like the art students we see poised near masterpieces with their sketchbooks and charcoals, learn to reproduce the master's craft" ("English Composition as a Happening II" 267). Dissatisfied with the sterile academic environment textbook ideology creates, Sirc often proposes alternative models for composition writing.[13] Drawing upon Charles Deemer's 1967 *College English* essay, "English Composition as a Happening," Sirc offers the Happening as one such model, and in general, proposes the avant-garde as an appropriate example for students (and instructors) to learn from. Deemer felt performance could provide a new form for stagnant student writing, which is often out of place with its temporal cultural moments. Extrapolating from the Happening's inclusion of popular culture into performance, Deemer looked to the influence of popular culture's main figures and the ways they command attention by reshaping the medium in which they speak, "What [Stokely] Carmichael and [Timothy] Leary have learned about the university auditorium--how to make it 'cool'--we must learn about the university classroom" (124). The "cool" classroom Deemer envisioned, and Sirc updates, involves the McLuhanist notions of participation and collage, transforming the "hot" traditional classroom of teacher domination into a "cool" one

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[13] Elsewhere, Sirc has argued for treating composition classes as if they were A & P parking lots, ("Writing Classroom as A & P Parking Lot"), like the Sex Pistols ("Never Mind the Tagmemics, Where's the Sex Pistols?") or like the work of Marcel Duchamp ("'What is Composition . . . ?' After Duchamp (Notes Toward a General Teleintertext").

where all are actively engaged. The Happening, Sirc feels, offers instructions on how to

create a cool classroom.

The Happening, an early '60s artistic event sometimes held outdoors, with no plan

or script, incorporated everyday objects as well as audience participation into the event's

make-up. Consequently, the Happening represented a live-action collage in which all the

parts juxtaposed with one another. "The Happening altered the relationship of viewers to

the work," Ray Carney writes.

> [In the Happening] Viewers are not allowed to be passive consumers. Not only are they asked to contribute to the event (by bringing a radio and playing music in this instance), but they are forced to engage with themselves actively in making sense of it (choosing where to look and what to pay attention to among multiple, simultaneous events). (Carney 197)

Writing in the early '60s, Henry Geldzahler, one time curator for the Department of

Contemporary Arts at the Metropolitan Museum, defined the Happening as such:

> The audience and the performance are surrounded by what happens; the action is never merely dead ahead but in several possible directions at once. The viewer must make choices, decide which action to follow if several are proceeding at once, or where the next event is likely to occur if nothing is going on for the moment. Thus each viewer or participant experiences a slightly different aspect of the multiplicity that occurs. (81)

And artist Allan Kaprow described one Happening he performed as follows:

> You come in as a spectator and maybe you discover you're caught in it after all, as you push things around like so much furniture. Words rumble past, whispering, dee-daaa, barroom, love me, love me; shadows joggle on screens, power saws and lawnmowers screech just like the I.R.T. at Union Square. ("Happenings' in the New York Scene" 37)

Following what he calls, "the road not taken in composition studies," Sirc maps a

series of temporal moments juxtaposed with one another that reveal artistic practices, like

the Happening, composition studies has unnecessarily overlooked ("English Composition

as a Happening II" 268). In fact, the rhetoric of cool learns a great deal from Sirc's juxtapositions; his focus on 1963, 1966, and 1968 generates similar patterns found within this dissertation. Central to these moments are important media-based events composition studies pays little attention to, often behaving as if writing itself is not a media form, or forgetting that "writing is a technology," as Walter Ong writes (81). Joining the '63 CCCC conference with, for instance, Alan Kaprow's experimental word-collages and performances prompts Sirc to find the Happening to be an appropriate model for the composition classroom because of the ways it deals with CCCC's concerns. Quoting Kaprow, Sirc states, "'To the extent that a happening is not a commodity but a brief event. . . it may become a *state of mind*'" ("English Composition as a Happening II" 282). The analogy suggests, then, that composition studies can be transformed from the commodity it has become (i.e. the claim that composition functions as a service industry within the university) into a place of knowledge making, a state of mind where students learn through experience with the everyday, each other, and performance.

Alternative forms like the Happening evolve out dissatisfaction with the status quo; they represent another version of Hofstadter's anti-intellectualism, one that emerges from within the apparatus rather than from without. For Sirc, contemporary composition students experience the same displeasure with the educational status quo that artists of the 1960s felt. Current textbook ideology, whose origins are in 1950s and 1960s publishing, prevents composition studies from breaking with the status quo and from experimenting with alternative writing formats. "Powerful, alternative formal possibilities are now key genres of public discourse," Sirc claims, "and kids understand them, and Composition Studies could care less" ("Virtual Urbanism" 14). The Happening, like Sirc's other

model of *virtual urbanism*, offers alternative classroom possibilities based on one-time forms of public discourse. Both models produce a collaborative space where students maintain the ability to roam and collect, to become, as Sirc describes it, modern *flaneurs*.

> The dominant classroom genre could be the *passagen-werk*; our chief evaluative criteria would then include intense desire evocative ambiance, interesting statement, cool material, traces of the poetic, and the frisson of the buzz. ("Virtual Urbanism" 17)

Under these terms, the student intellectual is no longer shaped only by the textbook ideology of clarity and coherence. Instead, the student as *flaneur* (which I began discussing in Chapter One and later discussed in Chapter Three regarding hip hop) collects the temporal, social, economic, racial, and gendered, media formations produced in digital culture and juxtaposes them with her daily encounters. Sirc's choice of Kaprow, then, is important. Kaprow's 1962 Happening *Words* (performed at the Simolin Gallery in New York) collected quotations from a variety of sources (comic books, political slogans, published writings) and hung them from the ceiling and the walls of an enclosed room. Viewers were encouraged to either add to the hanging and posted collections or rearrange the display. In the background, turntables played recordings of Kaprow's voice. Kaprow described the event as follows:

> Overhead are crudely-lettered signs urging the visitors to roll the rolls, to tear off more word strips from stacks nailed to a center-post, and to staple them over the ones already there; in addition, they are exhorted to play the Victorolas and listen to the records I had made, of talk, lectures, shouts, advertisements, ramblings of nonsense, etc. – either singly or all together. ("Words: An Environment" 446)

The various selections and participant input create a collective-based space in which discourse is all around us rather than concentrated on a single page. To understand discourse, *Words* suggests, one must engage with it, thereby understanding it as cool. In a

sense, one learns "how to do things with words" in the exhibit, an echo of J.L. Austin's influential text of the same name and which was published in 1962.[14] One selection in Kaprow's performance read: "Try a record, try a poem. Listen to the word on the Victorolas. Words. Words. Words!" *Words* brought together the output of various media forms as collection. In this sense, communicating means collecting.

Understanding writing as avant-garde practice (via Kaprow) returns the rhetoric of cool to its popular notions of rebellion. The avant-garde, as Gregory Ulmer stresses, often have stood for rebellion against dominant systems of thought.

> I am thinking of the avant-garde movements in the arts, which broke with the Renaissance tradition of representational realism, and the development of film and television, which brought about a shift in the dominant mode of communication in our culture. ("Textshop for Post(e)pedgagoy" 38)

The kind of classroom Sirc and Deemer imagine as cool asks students to rebel against the institution of composition studies in order to allow new practices to emerge. While this definition of cool might suggest an anti-intellectual attitude, Gerald Graff finds similar conceptions to embody cool as an intellectual project. Arguing for academic recognition of a new intellectualism called "hidden intellectualism," Graff states that contemporary students possess "intellectual resources [that] go unnoticed because they are tied to ostensibly anti-intellectual interests" ("Hidden Intellectualism" 22). These resources, found in the culture of the street or learned from popular media, may appear anti-intellectual but in fact possess a different approach to intellectualism. They lead to a student-orientated criticism understood as cool. "What is most great criticism, after all," Graff asks, "but an elaborated way of saying in effect, 'It sucks' or 'It's cool?'" ("Hidden Intellectualism" 35).

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[14] The lectures Austin's book was based on occurred earlier, however, in 1955.

Bill Readings' *The University in Ruins*, on the other hand, does not call this new intellectualism cool, but does argue for a restructuring of the university along the lines of Baudrillard's cool discourse. For Readings, the university is a "non-referential" locale. Creating the neologism "dereferentialization," Readings addresses "the place of the University in society at large, and the internal shape of the University as an institution" (167) by suggesting that the university "no longer refers to a specific set of things or ideas" (17). Like Baudrillard's sense of cool as commutation, a discourse absent of referents, Readings' university has commutated into something without material referent to identify it as having a specific location within academic culture. Readings aligns this sense of dereferentialization with so-called subversive practices the rhetoric of cool draws from; Readings "tries to make dereferentialization the occasion for *détournements* and radical lateral shifts" (167-168). "We have to realize that the University is a *ruined institution*," Reading writes (169). In its place appears what Readings calls The University of Excellence, a capitalist enterprise of evaluation that is simultaneously void of any content. "The University of Excellence is the simulacrum of the idea of a University" (54). Like Baudrillard's cool, discourse becomes tied to the simulacrum, the virtual. To think of the university as a virtual place, a dereferentialized figure, we position discourse in the electronic sphere.

## Technology and the Institution

Computers and writing theorists often argue that the notion of a simulacrum environment, a place without referent, does not eliminate the presence of an ideologically constructed interface. Notably, Cynthia Selfe, Richard Selfe, and Gail Hawisher have stressed the need to decode the interfaces constructed in computer environments so that

new media does not merely repeat the ideology of the dominant institution. The university in ruins as cool place of knowledge production, therefore, may function as virtual or simulacrum, yet it may not eliminate the need to decode the alternative interfaces it constructs in the digital age. Selfe and Selfe contend that with new media come "academic boundary lands associated with computer interfaces" that are "partly constructed along ideological axes that represent dominant tendencies in our culture" (481). Regarding the university, the ideology of positivism and the student complacency it encourages can be repeated just as easily in a computer classroom. Selfe and Hawisher advice teachers accordingly.

> Unless we remain aware of our electronic writing classes as sites of paradox and promise, transformed by a new writing technology, and unless we plan carefully for intended outcomes, we may unwittingly use computers to maintain rigid authority structures that contribute neither to good teaching nor to good learning. (64)

In *Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Paying Attention*, Cynthia Selfe constructs an important argument against unabashed embracement of technology in the classroom that fails to consider the social, racial, and gendered issues at stake as well. Interested in expanding traditional notions of literacy to include technology, Selfe draws attention to the ways public literacy projects (which for 1963 include Project English) ignore the social implication of technology classroom adoption.

> The national project to expand technological literacy has not resulted in a better life or more democratic opportunities or an enriched educational experience for all Americans, as most of us might wish. Rather, it has served to improve the education only for some Americans. (Selfe 7)

Selfe's critique, that education does not pay enough attention to other factors involved in the move to digitalize the learning process, provides the rhetoric of cool with

an analogy for 1963 definitions of composition literacy (teaching students how to write well). The 1963 CCCC call for new classroom practices as well as the work done by Braddock, et al and Albert Kitzhaber, for example, intended to promote a project to increase writing competency. Yet, as I continue to stress, they seem to have ignored media developments of the same time period. Composition's "interface;" that is, its self-presentation of a discipline emerging out of 1963 theoretical innovations, needs its own decoding. In addition to the many moments I've repeatedly pointed out, a number of other factors concerning the development of what we today know as the Internet and its surrounding web culture come from 1963. I am not arguing that the Internet begins in 1963; rather that 1963 contributions to information technology, interface design, and computers in general must be juxtaposed with the year's composition interests if we are to avoid "the perils of not paying attention," as Selfe states.

In Chapter One, I introduced Ted Nelson's and Douglas Engelbart's 1963 contributions to the creation of hypertext. Other developments are worth noting as well. "The enabling agency for the Internet, ARPA, was created by the [Department of Defense] in 1957," Brian Winston writes (325). But according to Winston, important innovations to ARPA occurred between 1962-1964. In 1964, Paul Baran, a US Airforce researcher, designed a way to effectively and quickly distribute information electronically by breaking up the information into many pieces. Called "distributive adaptive message blockswitching," Baran's idea eventually became known as "packet switching" the way information is conveyed over the Internet today. "Baran's scheme envisaged individual messages being broken up and sent in discrete packages around a network to achieve the same result – a more even flow of data through the entire network" (Winston 324). The

fragmented model packet switching endorses can be understood as analogous to the fragmented entries which comprise cool's collagist form. Another important event involves the inclusion of visuality into computing. "Between 1962 and 1964, [Joseph Licklider] moved the emphasis [in ARPA] from command and control to graphics, war-games, better languages and time sharing systems. This agenda became, within ARPA, the Information Processing Techniques Office (IPTO)" (Winston 326).[15] While the Internet's origins became quickly intertwined with a graphical interface, in 1962, Ivan Sutherland was creating Sketchpad, the first graphic manipulation program.

> Sketchpad allowed a computer operator to use the computer to create sophisticated visual models on a display screen that resembled a television set. The visual patterns could be stored in the computer memory like any other data, and could be manipulated by the computer's processor. (Rheingold 90)

An early predecessor to contemporary programs like Adobe Photoshop, Sketchpad expanded perception of what the computer could do by creating a "kind of simulation language that enabled computers to translate abstractions into perceptually concrete forms" (Rheingold 90).

As information technology moved in the direction of fragmented and graphic display oriented systems, personal computing also began to stir interest. While the personal computer did not come into existence until the 1970s, the introduction of the minicomputer dates to 1963. "The CDC PDP 8, the first mini, had been on the market since 1963," Winston claims (327). Relevant to today's computer sizes, the mini was not actually "mini"; however, it allowed for interaction between user and machine at levels previously impossible. At MIT, development synchronically produced LINC, another

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[15] Licklider was the one who commissioned Engelbart to create the mouse in 1963.

minicomputer, cited by the IEEE Computer Society to be the first interactive personal computer. These innovations – the introduction of fragmented, computing language, visual displays, and visual manipulation - juxtaposed with the theoretical and practical work put forth by Engelbart and Nelson, reveal an early computing need to extend contact between the individual and the machine. By 1963, it was apparent to many in the computing industry that computers could be powerful in the hands of everyday users, as opposed to only industry experts. Writing about the innovative possibilities personal computing posed, Engelbart noted

> The category of "more radical innovations" includes the digital computer as a tool for the personal use of an individual. Here there is not only promise of great flexibility in the composing and rearranging of text and diagrams before the individual's eyes, but also promise of many other process capabilities. (9)

Englebart's theories have seen themselves updated on the World Wide Web where personal computing meets cool in the work of the Web's founder, Tim Berners-Lee. In his quest for an efficient way to sort information on the Web by redesigning how information is stored and retrieved, Berners-Lee turns to the word cool. Berners-Lee's concept of URIs (Universal Resource Identifiers, transitive addresses that tell browsers where to find information) as opposed to the current URLs (Uniform Resource Locators, the version in place today on the Web which is more static than URIs) relies on personal interaction at the level of cool. Berners-Lee writes:

> What makes a cool URI?
> A cool URI is one which does not change.
> What sorts of URI change?
> URIs don't change: people change them (Berners-Lee).

Thus, like Engelbart, computing and change maintain strong links; there remains tension between user-capable manipulation and leaving text as is. The task for writing instruction

is to adopt attitudes like the former, to allow its methodologies to be altered and shaped as new technologies develop. Composition studies has been late entering the game. The introduction of computers into writing classes did not become a major issue until the early 1980s,[16] almost thirty years after Engelbart proposed computing as a way of writing. Even then, instruction in how computing alters the logic of print culture was not introduced for another decade or so when writers like Gregory Ulmer, Victor Vitanza and Myka Vielstimmig (Kathleen Blake Yancey and Michael Spooner) began asking composition studies to reevaluate the language of its instruction. These writers proposed models for how to do so, models which underscored fragmentation, visuality, simulation, and manipulation.

## Cool: Computing as Writing

The rhetoric of cool brings computing into the composition classroom by way of the various moments explored in the 1963 collage. Cool's choice for hypermedia discourse is hypertext, an option motivated by Nelson, Engelbart, and McLuhan's presence in the collage this dissertation creates. Although cool is not limited to hypertext and could be explored in the MOO, on e-mail, in video, on CD-ROMs, in gaming, or in other areas, most of the examples I will explore in this conclusion will provide models for hypertextual work in the computer classroom. The aim of this conclusion is not to be inclusive, but rather to begin thinking pedagogically about cool, to start discussion on cool writing so that further work can be done. The context of the conclusion is mostly

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[16] See Cynthia Selfe, Gail Hawisher, Paul LeBlanc, and Charles Moran's history of computing and education, *Computers and the Teaching of Writing in Higher Education, 1979-1994: A History*. See also Gail Hawisher's " Research Update: Writing and Word Processing" in *Computers and Composition* 5.2 1988, "Studies in Word Processing" in *Computers and Composition* 4.1 1986, and "The Effects of Word Processing on the Revision Strategies of College Freshmen" in *Research in The Teaching of English* 21.2 1987.

theoretical, therefore, with examples of what we might deem variations of cool already in place. The pedagogical applications of cool will be explored more completely in further work, the follow-up to this text.

While hypertext's origins belong in the '63 collage, a considerable amount of early work in hypertext theory found support for the medium in Derrida's often cited comment in *Of Grammatology*, "The end of linear writing is indeed the end of the book" (86). For Robert Coover, Derrida's remark provides the motivation to declare paradoxically at one moment the end of print and the dawning of the new age of hypertext, and several years later, the end of hypertext,[17] Rather than proclaim print dead, the book dead, or any other form of discourse as no longer functional, cool follows McLuhan's argument that new media doesn't replace old media, but rather alters it, adds to it, and appropriates it in unexpected ways. "A new medium is never an addition to the old one, nor does it leave the old one in peace. It never ceases to oppress the older media until it finds new shapes and positions for them" (*Understanding Media* 158). Hypertext studies has followed suite, treating at great length the potential the medium poses for and the ways it modifies established, literate practice like annotation, extended bibliography, or non-linear writing. John Slatin, Jane Yellowlees Douglas and Nancy Kaplan[18] have offered detailed analysis of how hypertextual reading and writing practices function within these parameters. Often concentrating on how the link supports these capabilities,

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[17] See Coover's 1992 *New York Times* article "The End of Books" and his 19  *Feed Magazine* article "Literary Hypertext: The Passing of the Golden Age."

[18] See Slatin's "Reading Hypertext: Order and Coherence in a New Medium" in *College English* December 1990, Douglas' "Gaps, Maps, and Perception: What Hypertext Readers (Don't Do)" in Perforations Vol 2 No 3 1992,  and Kaplan's *E-literacies: Politexts, Hypertexts and Other Cultural Formations in the Late Age of Print* online at
http://raven.ubalt.edu/staff/kaplan/lit/index.cfm?whichOne=Hypertexts_601.cfm

hypertext theory proposes its application in useful ways, but leaves open other possibilities for hypertext to be taught as writing. Kaplan warns that "isolating the link from other constituent elements of hypertexts, however, distorts the view of reading and literacy a more inclusive understanding might yield" ("Literacy Beyond Books" 220). The rhetorical moves I've described throughout this dissertation, then, work from Kaplan's addendum and allow for a more inclusive understanding of the rhetorical possibilities within electronic writing.

One such move emphasized throughout the rhetoric of cool is collage. While Nelson' s original vision of hypertext imagined a collagist space where text and image overlap and mutually interact, and while Englebart's windows system proposed, even if indirectly, collage as a method for "augmenting intellect," collage has not always been at the forefront of hypertext studies. In fact, hypertext studies treats non-linearity as the medium's greatest asset, often concentrating on its employment in stand alone hypertext systems like Storyspace (as opposed to the more generic "web writing") and in fiction, pieces like Michael Joyce's *afternoon, a story* and Shelly Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*. Highlighting these works as exemplary of hypertext's potential as writing, George Landow does direct attention to the collagist applications of hypertext as well. In *Hypertext 2.0*, Landow suggests that hypertext and collage share similar attributes, that "all hypertext webs, no matter how simple, how limited, inevitably take the form of textual collage." Landow describes his students' hypertextual work in Storyspace as "the form of appropriation and juxtaposition" (257) inherent to collage. Landow's students bring together excerpts of writings from various authors to critique the role of the author in electronic discourse. For Landow, hypertextual writing, defined by its usage of links to

connect ideas and images, is motivated by collagist juxtapositions.[19] The reason, Landow notes, is because by permitting users

> to make connections between texts and between text and images, the electronic link encourages one to think in terms of connections. To state the obvious: one cannot make connections without having things to connect. Those linkable items must not only have some qualities that make the writer want to connect them, they must also exist in separation, divided. (171)

Landow's description also feeds into Kaplan's call for hypertext theory to address hypertext's "other constituents." These undefined elements Kaplan focuses upon can be thought of as juxtaposition, appropriation, signifyin(g), iconicity, nostalgia, the breakdown of grammar, in short, all of the items described in this dissertation up until now. While some of these have been taken up by specific hypertext theorists or authors, none have been examined completely as a rhetoric of electronic writing. The ways these various attributes of cool can be manipulated within the electronic writing process for rhetorical purposes ties into Engelbart's understanding of electronic writing as a process of manipulation. Outlining such writing as including concept, symbol, and external symbol manipulation, Engelbart felt that working with these terms would assist in constructing a new media-based language suitable to the technological advancements of the twentieth century. "It would seem *unlikely* that the language we now use provides the best possible service to our minds in pursuing comprehension and solving problems, " Engelbart wrote. "It seems very likely that a more useful language can be devised" (13).

> Both the language used by a culture, and the capability for effective intellectual activity, are directly affected by their evolution by the means

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[19] What Landow theorizes through his students' work, Ulmer puts into practice. See Ulmer's "Grammatology (in the Stacks) of Hypermedia: A Simulation" in *Literacy Online: The Promise (and Peril) of Reading and Writing with Computers*, ed. Myron C Tuman and "The Miranda Warnings" in *Hyper/Text/Theory*, ed. George Landow.

by which individuals control the external manipulation of symbols. (Engelbart 14)

Engelbart proposed that his hypothesis of symbol manipulation be tested on the computer. In turn, the computer would operate as the writing tool for this new language of manipulation. "In the limit of what we might now imagine," he wrote,

> this [symbol manipulator] could be a computer, with which individuals could communicate rapidly and easily, coupled to a three-dimensional color display within which extremely sophisticated images could be constructed, the computer being able to execute a wide variety of processes on parts or all of these images in automatic response to human direction. (14)

Current practices of Engelbart's system of concept and symbol manipulation appear in, among other places, Mark Amerika's online web writing. Best known for his innovative hypertext *Grammatron*, Amerika provides cool with a contemporary theory and application of manipulation. Amerika's notion of "playgiarism" takes up the call to use manipulation as writing through the practice of "surf-sample-manipulate." "What I'm describing here is the digital equivalent of collage-art, one where the contemporary artist uses the forms of new media to subvert the commercial redundancy of that same new media," Amerika proclaims ("Surf -Sample-Manipulate"). Amerika's Alt-X network of writers, artists, and theorists merge electronic modes of discourse with popular culture to form, what Amerika terms, the Avant-Pop. A return to avant-garde resistance tactics (previously discussed in this chapter via Ulmer and Sirc), Amerika's Avant-Pop reestablishes Burroughsian manipulation practices to "Use the media to subvert the media. Become subversive *mediums*" ("In Memoriam"). Amerika's "Avant-Pop Manifesto" identifies its goals as parasitic (Burroughs) and manipulative:

> The single most important creative directive of the new wave of Avant-Pop artists is to enter the mainstream culture as a parasite would sucking

out all the bad blood that lies between the mainstream and the margin. By sucking on the contaminated bosom of mainstream culture, Avant-Pop artists are turning into Mutant Fictioneers, it's true, but our goal is and always has been to face up to our monster deformation and to find wild and adventurous ways to love it for what it is. The latter strains of Postmodernism attempted to do this too but were unable to find the secret key that led right into the mainstream cell so as to facilitate and accelerate the rapid decomposition of the host's body. This is all changing as the emerging youth culture, with its deep-rooted cynicism and nomadic movement within the "dance of biz," now has the power to make or break the economic future of decrepit late-capitalism. ("Avant-Pop Manifesto")

The language of Avant-Pop derives from popular culture (in positive and negative approaches to popular culture's influence on consumerism, electronic culture, and writing) as well as from what might be called a *de-grammarization* of new media. Amerika's *Grammatron*, in effect, destabilizes grammar as it recreates a web grammar of text, sound, and image. The fragmented narrative proposes "to regain control over the movement of the letters, their meaning strung together here in this electronic writing space" while allowing itself to disassemble in the browser's open window (*Grammatron*). The challenge for academic writing is to consider how cool as a process of *de-grammarization* does not oppose composition's interests in teaching a curriculum that has always emphasized grammar along with other important elements (voice, audience, organization), but rather appends it through a new media syntax which asks cool writers to establish new grammatical precepts.

**Cool Syntax**

Without indicating that his rhetoric is one for the computer classroom, Victor Vitanza's disjointed syntax marks one example of the types of grammar breakdown the rhetoric of cold draws from and hypertext works like Amerika's recreate. Whereas popular culture might have once defined cool talk as street slang, electronic culture's cool

manipulation of language involves the breakdown of grammatical familiarity for alternative rhetorical purposes (not unlike Anger and Smith's defamiliarization of the Hollywood language of cinematic production.) As Vitanza describes his approach to writing:

> I will make less of an attempt *to convince* my readers than *to provoke* them *into musing* along certain lines that are informed not by the traditional rules of argumentation, but by an alternative, nontraditional predisposition – namely, that change or the growth of knowledge is brought about not on the basis of, say, Popperian "critical rationalism" (as is developed by Karl Popper in his Objective Knowledge) but on a nondisciplinary, nonrational, nonargumentative basis. ("Critical Sub/Versions" 44)

Vitanza's project involves rethinking the history of rhetoric (as well as the current practice of composition) as a subversive practice. Consequently, writing becomes subversive, undermining its traditional role in the educational apparatus. Vitanza's approach to critique, provoking his audience/readership through nonrational, nondisciplinary syntactical breakdown, is useful to cool. Vitanza's rationale stems from "the necessity of writing alternative – *not* just complementary 're-visionary histories of Rhetoric' – *but* what I here call 'Nondisciplinary,' 'Sub/Versive Histories of Rhetoric" ("Critical Sub/Versions" 44-45). The discipline (English/composition studies), then, comes under attack as much as sentence structure does. Vitanza positions his syntactical breakdown in terms of composition studies, asking why composition ignores discursive innovations and challenges, those previously proposed by writers as diverse as Marinetti and Burroughs. Echoing hypertext's approach to writing, Vitanza remarks,

> Perhaps best described, this discourse searches for new ways of linkage, while it leaves behind traditional ways, which fix a point, plot an order. It, instead, connects paratactically (and. . .and . . . and), at any point, to any and every point. It is a discourse, then, without (a) discipline, nor is it especially in search of (a) discipline. ("Three Countertheses 140)

Vitanza's collapse of syntax and form fits with Richard Lanham's definition of, what he terms, a "digital rhetoric" exemplified by an "expressive process both alphabetic and iconic, an entity whose physicality is manifest, whose rhetoric is perfectly self-conscious – that is to say whose place in a complex matrix of behavior forms a native part of its expression" (240). As a digital rhetoric, the rhetoric of cool offers itself as an alternative rhetorical practice, one possibly considered non-disciplinary (cool as a term indicative of youth, pop culture, etc.) and subversive (the resistance practices latent to cool), set within a native part of expression (popular culture).

Put into practice on the Web and on e-mail, Vitanza's "sub-versions" materialize in the writings of Internet performance artist Mez[20] (Mary-Anne Breeze) who subverts writing by razing print's building blocks: grammar, syntax, or any traditional method of discursive exchange. A cyborgian e.e. cummings, Mez challenges the "coherence" and "clarity" demands so often made of the composition process. "No longer obeying the rules of grammar, linear language in this project goes out of control and splinters into words and codes governed by a new syntax," Mez's website declares. Mez teaches cool to use technology to produce language. "The use of the Internet is a practice which engenders idiomatic expressions of its own" ("4phoarOh4phoar Phile Knott Found"). In particular, Mez indirectly tests claims like those made by Alfred Grommon in his preface to the 1963 *Education of Teachers of English* collection. Grommon advises prospective teachers accordingly:

> Young people, to the highest degree possible, should discover in the English language an effective instrument of thought, expression and communication. To learn to gather facts and to examine experience with clarity of critical thought, to organize ideas and information clearly for

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[20] Mez's website is at: http://www.hotkey.net.au/~netwurker

communication to others, to develop a series of security in the use of language, to develop ability to think, speak, write, read and listen. (13)

Grommon's emphasis on clarity, like the authors of most composition textbooks, has since been disassembled by the cool writers of the Web who redefine the relationship between language and the machines that produce language (i.e. the computer). As Mez writes in an e-mail post to the Nettime discussion list:

> ..if u've eva coded, chatted, or simply condensed text in an online n.vironment ][4 the sake of brevity, etc][ then u should b able 2 tease out specific comphrehension points & integrate them in2 an absortion loop that seeks 2 alter the regular flow of text comprehension, and swing it in2 a method that n.gages semiotically reflective components....multitasking, information retrieval, and data searching all operate as netwurk templates that govern this new behavioural & infofragment creed...

> ...the "odd spelling and punctuation" that i 'ute.till.eyes' is actually a prime x.ample of the very components that make these contested mediamatic processes actual....if u examine the structure of the text i m.ploy, u'll c that stylistically these "aberrations" are actual x.tended meaning gaps that mimic the structure of the medium itself....code digressions, email conventions, hyperlinks that offer convex meaning nodes, and chat idioms all woven in2 a tapestry of new media ][communicative][ patterns ....... ....the idea of a procedural/penetrative formulation of cultural memes via the overarching cultural framework of any given system seems slightly nostalgic, a dip in the established pervasive kantian pool....

> ....i suppose as an auteur who is rapidly assisting to define the very language that operates & shifts within this cultural formu.][e][lation & the influential-wiring-behind-the-acculturation-board, the concept of a black][ed in][ box approach to cultural gestation in terms netitectonic [a splice between d&g + s&r if u will] seems obsolete.....[not that u alluded to this mark - but it is prevalent in reiterative echos thru various academically-directed net.wurk symbolisms]. ("Re: [Nettime-bold] File Under: OPEN vs. CLOSED SYSTEMS")

## The Writer as Hypertext

Following Mez's provocative work with e-mail, Kathleen Blake Yancey and Michael Spooner adopt the pseudonym Myka Vielstimmig in a series of essays that argue

for a restructuring of academic writing along the lines of the collagist dialogues mediums like e-mail support and hypertext creates through the hyperlink. In their work, the form of the essay interacts with its content, each influencing the other. Framed as a model for electronic writing, Yancey and Spooner refer to this type of writing as "writing for the screen" and locate it within the rhetorical tradition.

> The new essay involves writing for the screen – the screen of email, the screen of email going to print, the screen of hypertext, the screen of the Web. More to the point, and my most inflated claim: writing for the screen is a new rhetorical act. ("Petals" 105)

Yancey and Spooner's collaborative writings[21] reflect the mix within cool writing: cut and pasted moments of discourse recontextualized into critique. The sampled moments within their writings come from the authors' dialogue as well as the various quotations mixed into their conversations. Like the many examples I continue to draw upon, their work contrasts composition's adherence to coherence and clarity with the computing apparatus. "In some critiques of 'experimental' works (like this one?)," Yancey and Spooner self-reflexively comment, "there's a fundamental question about what counts as coherence, cohesion, and other interpretive conventions. I think what's happening in the field is not that writers are abandoning these, but that they are offering new forms of them" ("Petals" 100)

This new form leads Yancey and Spooner to argue for the "new essay," an associative combination of quotation and observation, non-linearity and juxtaposition, multi-vocality and textual overlap. "The new essay seems to have its own logic, intuitive, associative, emergent, dialogic, multiple--one grounded in working together and in

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[21] See : "A Single Good Mind: Collaboration, Cooperation, and the Writing Self" in *CCC* Feb 1998, "Postings on a Genre of Email" in *CCC* May 1996, and "Petals on a Wet Black Bough: Textuality, Collaboration, and the New Essay" in *Passions, Pedagogies, and 21st Century Technologies*. Eds, Gaile E. Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe.

re/presenting that working together" ("Petals" 90). The new essay, then, replicates the logic of the machine, the cut and paste methodology computer-based discourse teaches. To describe how this process works in the new essay, writing must reproduce discourse in the form of the machine's language: e-mail, hypertext, programming, etc. In this way, collaborative writing creates a collaboration between computer and writer.

> This method of collaboration – which we are arguing is one in a panoply of others – is best represented by a text's replicating it. This text speaks to its authors' collective intelligence, attempts to give it some definition by reference to the claims made here and the ways those claims were developed. The text, we might say, embodies collective intelligence and some of the ways, at least, that such intelligence is created. ("Collaboration" 61)

This collaboration, in turn, produces an alternative voice, an electronic voice which fails to differentiate between the various individuals (or individual texts) employed to construct discourse, but rather seems them as interacting and in constant juxtaposition.

For novelist Jeff Noon, such collaborations take place in what he calls The Cobralingus Engine. A hypothetical writing machine, The Cobralingus Engine transforms the writing machine Burroughs describes in *The Ticket That Exploded* into a DJ based system where readers record and re-record their readings (Noon uses DJ terminology like "sample" and "mix" to describe the process), simultaneously integrating their own writings with the history of literature. Noon's machine positions itself as an appropriate way to communicate in the 21$^{st}$ century cut and paste culture of media production.

> The Cobralingus Engine allows the user to manipulate language into new shapes and new meanings. The device takes an INLET text as a starting point, which is then processed to create another text entirely, known as the OUTLET. This outlet text can be seen as the ghost, or the unconscious desire, haunting the original text .(13)

A mix of image and text, Noon's writing machine treats language as manipulative (as Engelbart felt computer language should be), capable of adjustments and changes when need demands.

> The Cobralingus Engine makes use of the Metamorphiction process. This process imagines text to be a signal, which can be passed through various FILTER GATES, each of which has a specific effect upon the language. Each gate allows the writer to access different creative responses within his or her imagination. (13)

Like Kodwo Eshun's descriptions of DJs morphing with the machine (terrorwrists) or Yancey and Spooner's understanding of the new essay replicating computer language (juxtapositions), The Cobralingus Machine creates cool discourse by reconfiguring subject-identity formation, by commutating the tools of discourse with those who produce discourse. In the educational apparatus, theorists like Darren Tofts, R. Kinnane and A. Haig extend this idea through the construction of a machine-based pedagogy put into practice much in the way the title of their essay suggests: "I Owe the Discovery of this Image to the Convergence of a Student and a Photocopier." Like Yancey and Spooner, the writers juxtapose quotations and analysis, attempting to reproduce the experience of a student set loose with a photocopier. Their purpose is to redefine pedgagoy as itself a hypertextual practice influenced by the computer.

> Interactive technologies, though, promise a high degree of intervention and involvement in knowledge production: the student/user of new writing and electronic cultural technologies is a self-directed learner, the locus of a network of directed graphs, nodes, links, and cybernetic runs. The electronic toolkit complements the pen, hyperspace the page. Pedagogy, like hypertext, becomes a non-sequential process, a network of intersecting paths, some established (prescribed reading), some implied (suggested reading), others improvised (chance associations, initiative, idiosyncratic links). (255)

## Conclusion: Living in CoolTown

Finally, the corporate world appears to have noticed the effect computer-based writing has on selfhood as well and how that process belongs within the framework of cool. Computer manufacturer Hewlett Packard proposes a futurist society along the lines of the works I've briefly outlined here. CoolTown, where all life becomes intertwined with the machine, represents Hewlett Packard's vision of an information society operating around the concept of cool: interlinked, juxtaposed, machine directed lifestyles revolving around the computer.

> CoolTown is a place where the physical world and the virtual world meet, where technology works for you, not the other way around. It's a vision of pervasive computing, but instead of requiring new protocols and a new infrastructure, this relies on what's already there -- the Web. (Hewlett Packard)

In CoolTown, how we learn, how we communicate, how we wake up in the morning even, all are dictated by the machine. What Tofts, Kianane, and Haig identify as the student-learner as student-hypertext - her learning is intertwined with the tools of electronic pedagogy – Hewlett Packard reproduces as the cool figure – her lifestyle is intertwined with the tools of electronic discourse, and, in particular, with the Web. CoolTown re-envisions the web writer as cool. Thus, cool returns once again to the question of personality I addressed in the beginning of Chapter One, and which is at the heart of popular understandings of cool's most obvious meaning. As I mentioned early in Chapter One, this version of cool allows the cool figure to yield to the corporate identity. Hewlett Packard's CoolTown models itself not on pedagogical applications or rhetorical approaches to a web-based system of expression, but rather on corporate sponsorship and consumer spending habits. CoolTown repeats the typical advertising appropriations of

cool that I've described previously. It attempts to synthesize popular culture into catch-all slogans. CoolTown superficially attempts to display a McLuhanist integration of all media forms into one web-centered platform. The integration is limited. This dissertation marks a more complete demonstration of how to join various cultural moments and influences into a new practice. Without a rhetoric for constructing a cool discourse which allows for critique and the ability to resist dominant forms of expression, CoolTown allows cool to come full circle on the Web and become another commercial tool.

This is what the rhetoric of cool aims to prevent. Instead of the perpetual question, who is cool, which CoolTown returns to in its idea of the cool corporate user of technology, the rhetoric of cool asks: how does cool alter our understandings of who writes? What I have described throughout this dissertation is how a 1963 media intensive pedagogy opens up such questions to examination. The rhetorical lessons of the year's production in literature, film, music, and technology expands writing pedagogy's notion of who writes and how. Our challenge is to adapt these lessons to university curriculums for writing instruction. Who are the new media writers entering writing classrooms for the first time, writers who understand cool from a variety of perspectives, but not as writing, writers born into digital culture but not taught its rhetoric? At what point will composition teach them to engage with the machine, to learn a digital rhetoric centered around the concept of cool? At what point will students embody cool not at the level of personality, but at the level of performance and critique? Do we allow corporate entities like CoolTown to dictate the new forms of identity affected by technology, our do we push composition studies to take the leadership in developing the new, cool writers?

These writers no longer represent the marginal cultural figures (James Dean) or literary icons (Kerouac) most often associated with cool Rather, they are the writers engaging with electronic rhetorical practices like those I've described throughout this dissertation. Our task as writing instructors, therefore, is to bring composition into the age of new media, to teach writing as new media, to teach a cool pedagogy. This, in turn, will be the subject of my next project: practicing the rhetoric of cool.

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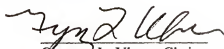
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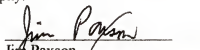
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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